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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Pastoralism and Technology in Recent Canadian Fiction

by

Ⓒ Margaret Gail Osachoff

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Pastoralism and Technology in Recent Canadian Fiction" submitted by Margaret Gail Osachoff in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosphy.

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ABSTRACT

Pastoralism is one of the possible perceptions of the relationship between man and nature. The desire for simplicity and stability in a time of complexity and change is a universal feeling and serves as the impulse behind pastoral literature. In this study, pastoralism is regarded as a set of values and ideas, an ideology or a view of life, presented primarily through the images and descriptions of technology and nature that each author chooses.

For this thesis I have chosen seven Canadian authors who have written during the last twenty-five years: they are Wayland Drew, Robert Kroetsch, Margaret Atwood, Leo Simpson, Mordecai Richler, Leonard Cohen, and Alice Munro. Although there are other writers who could have been chosen, these seven provide a wide variety of responses to the subject of pastoralism and technology.

My aim has been to examine the fiction of these writers with an eye to their treatment of landscape, the characters and their activities, and the prevailing mood of each work, to see how the term "pastoral" applies. By examining the specific technologies that each writer chooses, one can see how far each adheres to or departs from the conventional pastoral pattern which depends on a contrast of two environments of symbols--one (the one we are to favour) taken from nature to represent one set of values and ideas, and the other from technology to represent a contrasting set. Another pattern, one suggested by Marshall McLuhan, that can perhaps be called "modern pastoral" uses various technologies as symbols of both sets of values and ideas; the contrast is between old and new technologies and

the values and ideas that each represents, and the old is preferred.

Drew's novel, The Wabeno Feast, is an example of simple conventional pastoral, and all the other works chosen depart in minor or major ways from the pastoral pattern. Drew tries to persuade the reader to side with nature against destructive Western technology. Kroetsch also seems to favour the "natural" man over the "technological" man, but he is a more complex writer and is concerned with the process by which the raw material of life is turned into pastoral literature. Even more than Kroetsch, Atwood puts an ironic distance between herself and her material and demands a reconsideration of the pastoral vision. Tending toward a conservative viewpoint, Simpson examines the conflict between old and new technologies and the values that are attributed to each. Richler points the direction to the future of pastoral in focusing on superseded technologies in an urban setting. For Cohen, the ironic writer, all possibilities coexist on an equal footing, and synthesis rather than a choice between technology and nature is the goal. Munro uses potentially pastoral material, but because the mood of her work is not nostalgic, some of her stories are about pastoralism without being pastoral.

Examining literature with the conventional pastoral framework in mind can help explain certain events, symbols, characters, etc. that might otherwise remain obscure and can help develop new insights into the works in question. And enlarging the meaning of "pastoral" can connect some contemporary fiction to that written in the past, and can probably link literature written in different places. Even if time and place are different, pastoral literature will have as a constant the idea that a new technology creates a new environment that turns the old environment into pastoral art.

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PREFACE

"Environments are not passive wrappings," writes Marshall McLuhan, "but active processes. . . . Each new technology creates an environment that is itself regarded as corrupt and degrading. Yet the new one turns its predecessor into an art form."[1] It may not be completely accurate to call all past environments that have been converted into art forms "pastoral" for the conversion may be only analagous to pastoral. Nevertheless, "pastoral" may be a useful term to apply to modern fiction that contains all or some of the expected features of classical or romantic pastoral[2] and, above all, exhibits a nostalgia for past technologies and environments that have been turned into an art form by new technology. The complexity of pastoral has been noted by many critics;[3] and the addition of this concept which relates pastoralism to technological change, while doing nothing to simplify the term, does bring it up to date and make it applicable to Canadian fiction of the last twenty-five years. It is my intention in this thesis to examine a number of recent works of Canadian fiction in order to establish their main features, and to discover why they seem to be, if not pastorals, related to the pastoral mode. Other writers could be included in a study of pastoralism and technology in recent Canadian fiction, but I found that the seven writers I have chosen have a sufficiently wide variety of responses to the topic.[4]

CHAPTER I

WAYLAND DREW

Wayland Drew's fiction shows how important it is to recognize the technological horizon that separates new technology and the older environment which is transformed into an art form by that new technology. In The Wabeno Feast the new technology is that of nineteenth-century industrial mechanization as it extends into the twentieth century. In this novel the main characters try to escape from such an industrial society into a vaguely defined pastoral environment. Drew uses modern technology to criticize modern values: past technology and its attendant values are seen as morally superior. Hence, this pastoral is critical of modern society, but because it lacks satire and irony and depends totally on a hostility toward mechanization that may be shared by the reader, it has only a conventional force. In "Wood", in contrast, the protagonist can be judged weak and insufficient because of his excessive nostalgia for past technology. In this case the chainsaw has turned its predecessor and the environment of that older technology, the crosscut saw, into pastoral which can be seen as both appealing and destructive.

1.1 Wayland Drew presents some compelling propaganda against new (that is, nineteenth-century mechanistic) technology and for conservation and romantic pastoralism. His conversion into art of an old environment with its outmoded technologies takes the form of a diary which has survived the death of an eighteenth-century fur company factor in northern Ontario. This man, Drummond MacKay, is a civilized European--and a capitalist, imperialist exploiter who scorns Indian technology and values but admires the wabeno, the symbol of technological destruction, with whom he identifies.

The Wabeno Feast by Wayland Drew is a "doomsday" novel about the death of North American civilization in the very near future. It is the most negative of all the novels dealt with here and does not offer even a modicum of hope for the inhabitants of our continent. Drew tries to warn us against continuing our technological exploitation of nature and recommends that we choose a policy of "radical restraint" in regard to nature.[1] Otherwise the outlook for survival on a national, continental, and perhaps world, scale is totally bleak. Neglecting the fact that electronic technology is now the new technology, Drew appears to be totally terrified of modern or "new" technology, which is what he calls mechanistic technology, and has his protagonists escape to an older, wilderness environment. "Technological horizon" is a useful term to describe the imaginary line separating a past environment and new technology, and in Drew's work the technological horizon exists in the past. The Wabeno Feast shows many instances of nostalgia for past technologies, in this case technologies of the North American Indian, and its pessimism results from the fact that the time has long gone when the European invader could have chosen such technologies as an alternative to his own. It is this nostalgia for past technologies and a past environment that makes the novel pastoral.

Because of Drew's narrative technique, The Wabeno Feast appears to be more difficult and complex than it really is. But because the characters and situations are viewed from the outside, the reader has little trouble finding what "the truth" is within the context of the novel, a problem which besets readers of Surfacing and Gone Indian, to give two examples. Drew's novel is basically rather compelling propaganda for conservation, a warning to the reader to heed the grim lessons of the distant past and the recent past, a last attempt to have us change our attitudes, and resulting actions, toward nature and technology. He does this by presenting us with two stories, one of them divided into past and present time, the other completely in the distant past. In the present Paul and Liv Henry are fleeing Toronto for life (or death) in the wilderness north of Lake Superior. As they proceed by canoe they meet many of the people Paul has known in his life. Alternating with this action in the present are chapters about the recent past (since World War II) which give Paul's background and, to a lesser extent, the background of his three best friends, all of whom have come to Toronto from Sable Creek, a pulp and paper town in northern Ontario. The second story takes the form of Drummond MacKay's journal which Paul reads in the evenings, as he would read a novel, as he and his wife paddle into the interior of the continent retracing the voyage that MacKay made almost two hundred years before.

It is this journal--a parable about the beginning of the conflict between nature and technology in Canada, between the Indian's way of life and the white man's--that presents the core of Drew's concern for ecology and conservation and his analysis of the reasons for western civilization "going bad." He uses one person, Drummond MacKay, to present his case against reason and civilization and for simple romantic pastoralism by having MacKay meet and live with Indians and in this way points out to us the shortcomings, indeed the pernicious effects, of European civilization.

MacKay is a young Scot who comes to Canada to get away from the "misfortunes of the past year" and become the factor at the Frog Lake post north of Lake Superior.[2] He is a keen observer, but he sees what he is prepared to see. He has an eye for natural resources: he notices that there is "much fine timber" on the shores of the St. Lawrence ready to be exploited by the Europeans who come to Canada (p. 19). As a contrast to the Indian camps are the settlements of the white man, an admirable attempt to maintain civilization in the wilderness, MacKay thinks:

> The settlements are rude indeed and their grasp on the landscape tenuous, although the inhabitants make a brave front with whitewash and announce thereby that their dwellings are separate from the surrounding wilderness, and that they intend to keep them so. Such fortitude is heartening, and a contrast to the anonymity of the savages. (p. 19)

European civilization encourages the separation of man from nature; to be civilized is to stop seeing oneself as one among many animals, all of whom have an equal right to live. Such an attitude is necessary for the successful exploitation of resources, be they animal, vegetable, or mineral. Rather than being content to recognize himself as an anonymous member of the group as the Indian does, such an exploiter emphasizes his distinctive individuality.

At heart MacKay is an imperialist. He looks with disfavour on the northmen who transport him by canoe from Sault Ste. Marie because they "have largely forsaken the culture of their birth . . . Several, I am told, have descended almost to the level of the savages; indeed, most have adopted the dress of the country and have allowed their hair to grow long" (p. 157). MacKay, of course, manages, although with difficulty, to keep himself clean and neat for the whole trip and cannot see that to adapt to the country and the manners of the native people of Canada can be a positive act. To preserve a foreign culture might be seen as admirable in some contexts by those with a garrison mentality, but in the context of this novel it is a negative imperialistic act. At no point does MacKay want to be like the Indians or live as they do. He has heard that Indians are "an inferior breed and corrupt beyond redemption" (p. 19). They are definitely not noble savages:

> if the "noble savage" is not mere phantasy he does not exist on this continent, and it is small wonder that these have so easily been overwhelmed by our superior planning, determination, and execution whenever it has been necessary to take arms against them. (p. 54)

It seems that MacKay thinks that Indians are weak and inferior "by nature" and that the influence of the white man has nothing to do with their state. But Indians right from the beginning of their contact with Europeans were put down by superior technology (that is, superior in strength and destructive effect). MacKay has not seen these people before the advent of European technology so his views are not reliable. He expects that they should have been "elevated from prolonged contact with Europeans" and blames the Indians because they haven't been (p. 54). Another time he comments that Indians "are placid creatures, drawn irresistably [irresistibly] to our panoply and superior utensils" (p. 159). These people, however, had no need of these "superior utensils" before the white man came and created that need. There is food in plenty on land and water, but the European comes and creates false needs in the Indian. The phrase "our goods" is ironic because these European articles prove to be bad for the Indian and destroy his way of life (p. 162). In addition, two of the "gifts" the white man brings are smallpox and cholera, two diseases to which the Indians have no resistance, and the medical technology needed to relievesuffering is not available.

At one point in his journey to his post MacKay sees, with the aid of his simple telescope, a group of Indians who are different from all others that he has encountered so far. He is impressed by "a tautness and precision in alignment" of their canoes on the beach and by the symmetry of the arrangement of their tents (p. 82). These outward marks of "civilization" are exactly the kind that would impress a man who holds the views that MacKay has. The second thing that he notices is the strange cry coming from the Indian camp--a cry neither of pleasure nor of agony and yet of both, a "long pallid and futile howl" quite different from the impression left by Gustave's death-defying end (p. 82). Then he sees that these Indians "bore an ambivalent pallor," that they have skin "not unlike the skin of a drowned man" (p. 83, p. 85). They are tall and thin and wear pale-coloured clothes and have their arms covered with greased ochre. Also, they have an "alertness and anticipation" not seen in other Indians (p. 86). One of the voyageurs in MacKay's company who has lived among the Indians explains that these particular Indians are wabenos. A wabeno

> would use any means to cure disease or to quench an unrequited love, and those who placed themselves in his influence and used his potions on themselves or on others must submit entirely their will to his . . . It was good, he added, that the power of the wabeno had declined, and that such sorceries as he practised so as to conjure an overturn of nature grew less common as the Company's influence spread. (p. 84)

What happens is that the white wabeno supplants the Indian wabeno. The magic of the wabeno which is used to overturn nature is much like the technology of the white man who also endeavours to overturn nature. The voyageur-translator does not see that the white man's "magic" is (and will become increasingly) pernicious too, and it is the twentieth-century sections of the novel that provide the reader with that perspective.

The wabenos are associated with fire, the promethean element that is essential to modern technology. They call it into being, worship it, and are probably consumed by it. Their cooking fire is twenty feet high, "a conflagration," which gets larger as they dance around it in such a way "as if they themselves had been spitted into place for roasting " (p. 87). Their faces show "mingled pain and pleasure" as they dance, and MacKay remarks upon their fortitude:

> The cause of their colour thus became apparent--ash-white from the scars of burns, and . . . I saw that in some cases their very manhoods had been seared away.
>
> This revelation, more than any other, touched me to the roots of my being. . . . [I] was left to conclude that the intensity of this playful competition led some to that ultimate test, whereby manhood itself was sacrificed; but to what end, or to what god or goddess, that I could not tell. (p. 87)

It is strange that MacKay of all people should be appalled by this sacrifice of manhood to a "greater end" because he himself is willing to give up everything for the good of the Company. Although it is not clear to MacKay, it is clear to the reader that the wabenos' destructive act is a substitute for or a denial of sex. They end their feasting and dancing by burning the whole island in "a general consummation " (p. 88).

In this way MacKay is like a wabeno: he represses the passion in his nature and condemns all others for not doing the same. He has the same feelings of disgust toward people that Gulliver had once he identified himself with the Houyhnhmns. One example is MacKay's attitude toward the captain of the boat to Montreal, who was a sensual fellow: "I took the advice of Antoninus and thought what revolting creatures men are in eating, sleeping, sexual intercourse, and all the other operations of nature" (p. 21). He describes the drunken voyageurs as though they were Yahoos: each one is "a bladder of venery . . . salacious . . . promiscuous . . . indiscriminate, licentious and wanton" (p. 51). They are "dull fellows," strong as percherons, and no more to him than "white apes" or beasts of burden (p. 109). Their lust and violence at the Grand Portage fort repels MacKay, and he exclaims: "Was this, then, the lot of man in this new world, to hurl upon it the vices of the capitals, by moonlight, in a raw and bestial manner? . . . Is this the end of all his journeys, to couple in a brooding wilderness?" (p. 112). Although he is drawn to wild, romantic scenery--waterfalls, cliffs and storms--he finds passionate extremes in human behaviour offensive and even evil. It seems that he has naively expected that man in the New World would be more rational and morally better, that is, less lustful and violent.

1.2 The image of the frog represents the irrational in human nature, all aspects of which MacKay wants to deny in favour of reason because the rational and the technological, which go hand-in-hand here, form the basis of civilization as he sees it. The contrast of MacKay with Gustave, the "natural" man, gives emphasis to this idea. Elborn is presented as the embodiment of MacKay's irrational self, everything that is "natural" and hateful to MacKay and, thus, must be denied or destroyed.

However, there is no getting away from the dark, passionate side of human nature and retreating into a belief in reason, and Drew provides two separate ways to emphasize his point: through the device of the frog and through the character of Elborn. MacKay's opposition to the "natural" part of man is shown by Drew's use of the frog as the image for the animal in man. MacKay's end destination is Lake Nibbeke Omuhkukke which the English call Frog Lake. The canoe that transports MacKay from Montreal to Sault Ste. Marie has "a strange configuration in alizaron red, like the impress of a frog's foot" which is a symbol that has religious significance among certain Indian tribes, he is told (p. 23). The wendigo, a fearful mythical creature, is said to have frog-like eyes. Gustave, the sternsman of one of the canoes, seems to MacKay to be disgusting, "monstrous and frog-like" because he values the physical pleasures of life (p. 53). Gustave seems aware of MacKay's narrow view of humanity as rational:

> I gazed upon him from a height, as one might upon a frog in the water of a well. Indeed, with his pinched face and crooked limbs he was closer in form to a frog than to a man, and yet at the moment I perceived this similarity he said, as if to deny my thought, "Moi, je suis un homme!" (p. 51)

At Grand Portage fort MacKay gets very angry when Duff jokes and says that MacKay has killed a native woman because she wouldn't give in to his sexual demands. On this dead woman he has seen "an insignia in dark red, painted in the center of her brow . . . It was in size and shape similar to the impress of a small frog's foot" (p. 115). The other women of Miskobenasa's tribe, to which this woman belonged, don't wear this insignia so perhaps she is a kind of emissary welcoming MacKay as he goes further into the continent and further into knowledge of himself. Passion can lead to death as in the case of this woman, but it can also lead to artistic creation. When MacKay meets Miskobenasa's mother, she tells him about her artist husband who "had mixed the red blood of rock with oil and drawn a new figure beside the medicine frog of his vision" (p. 222). Obviously his artistic creation has a sexual basis because he had received this vision on their first night together.

MacKay has no interest in women, he says: "the Company was now my sole enterprise" (p. 54). Like a monk, he sublimates all of his energy into one channel. His determination to achieve success in fur-trading is clearly a compensation for his disappointment in love. When Shongwashe offers his young daughter to MacKay as a gift and comments that "it was in no way natural . . . for a man in the prime of health and youth so to deprive himself of women as I had done," MacKay is tempted to accept her for business and probably personal reasons too, but he refuses (p. 187). In the outburst that follows he inveighs against passion, the animal side of man:

> I will not risk the intimacy! It is a danger to all men and a peril well avoided. This lesson I have learned once so well that I have no need of a second teaching, for to abandon the bastion of mind and give oneself to the flesh is to venture unarmed and vulnerable into unknown country where enemies lie ready with knives and arrows. It is to admit oneself an animal, nothing more. (p. 188)

Then he finally reveals what might be the source of his ultra-rationalist position and his denigration of sex: before coming to Canada he was rejected by a woman, Kathleen, after she had encouraged him in his suit (p. 188).

However, MacKay must finally admit his sexual nature, one that he has in common with other men: "I was a man, and there was nature in me as in the others also!" (p. 237). In a total reversal from his previous position, MacKay declares after his first night with the Indian woman that he "cared no more for the Company and all of its affairs than a gliding fish cares for air" (p. 238). This striking image suggests very clearly that success in business enterprise depends on sexual repression, and if the business enterprise (the fur-trade in this case) can be seen as a microcosm of the larger capitalist imperialist ventures that are a vital part of European civilization with its sophisticated technologies, then the whole of western civilization depends on sexual repression--that is if the case of Drummond MacKay can be seen as one instance illuminating the whole rather than an isolated, idiosyncratic example.

For success in business not only must sexual desire be repressed, but even natural curiosity must be denied. For instance, MacKay's curiosity must be disguised as pragmatism in order for him to justify going with Elborn to see the wabeno feast (p. 84). Because he believes that Company officers should be dignified at all times, he suppresses the desire to join in the voyageurs' chant as they enter Grand Portage (p. 109). He has quit the church and scorns the sailors who pray and the voyageurs who scatter tobacco on the water and get a priest's blessing before they leave Montreal. However, his attacks of fever, headaches, and dysentery are a sign that he cannot rationally control all aspects of his own life;

and his gradually more humane responses to suffering are not stoical and rational. Gustave's drowning leaves him depressed, and he tries to comfort a weeping Indian boy at Grand Portage even though he realizes that to show feeling harms "business" and that his concern for the child has weakened his position in the eyes of the Company (p. 144). On the whole, though, he remains "business-like" and detached from the activities around him, and his telescope makes it possible for him to watch at a distance and record what he sees.

Gustave, for instance, would never make a successful businessman. When he calls MacKay "my young bourgeois," the class basis of the difference in their attitudes to life is evident (p. 53). MacKay has the perfect temperament to become a successful member of the bourgeoisie; he is rational, stoical, sober, represses passion and stresses individuality. Gustave, on the other hand, lives for the moment with good humour and enjoyment in the midst of tribulation. He believes that man needs tolerance, not rigidity--community of spirit, not excessive individuality. Self-sufficiency is not possible to frail man, and his death is proof. Gustave

> had endeavoured to save those of his companions who had grasped the gunwales . . . When the last had gone he rose erect in what had become a mere sinking piece of flotsam, raised both his fists and head to the howling sky, and suspended in that attitude, sank from sight. (pp. 80-81)

Two canoes of men risk life to search for survivors and bodies of the dead. Such a gesture of self-sacrifice and love is lost on MacKay. Although he says, "I watched the woeful drama out," his basic attitude to life and death precludes the concept of tragedy or "woeful drama" (p. 81). He also rejects laughter, dancing, drinking, and love-making as ways of coping with "the darkness which stretched forever"--meaning both the geographical and eschatological darkness, the frightening wilderness around them and the unknown facing each man after death (p. 52).

The second important device that the author of The Wabeno Feast uses to bring to our attention the fact that MacKay has repressed irrational qualities is to provide Elborn as the embodiment of this irrational self. Elborn (Hellborn?) is MacKay's companion in his voyage to the New World and into the interior of the continent. If, in the form of a quotation for every occasion, Aurelius is MacKay's rational self, Elborn can be seen as his irrational self. We are told that the two men are exactly the same age and have had the same schooling (p. 191). Elborn seems to know MacKay's inner thoughts, taunts him later about the blonde Indian woman, and is ever present. His first appearance is as a disembodied voice; MacKay says as he walks the deck during an Atlantic storm "challenging the gale," "I heard the voice of Elborn, faint and crying like a gull, 'Come back, MacKay! Have you gone mad?'" (p. 18). If Elborn represents the forces of passion and nature within MacKay, he would be concerned with saving MacKay's physical self at this point. Elborn's voice is faint here because MacKay's stoical mind is so much in command, but it gets louder as MacKay loses confidence and becomes doubtful about the strength and rightness of reason. Elborn compares their voyage down the St. Lawrence to going into a vortex of darkness, a "downward voyage"--perhaps another voyage into another "heart of darkness" both internal and external (p. 18). The wilderness is a sure test to "see what [MacKay's] impediments are" (p. 20). MacKay's view, on the contrary, is that it is an "upward progress, against both current and wind" (p. 19). In man's struggle against the hazards of nature, both internal and external, it is important to MacKay that he win.

MacKay wants at all costs to separate himself from Elborn once they land in Canada but can't, and they end up at the same trading post.

Everything about Elborn is objectionable to MacKay, especially his cynical laugh. His presence is "an oppression" on MacKay's spirits, and he is compared to "a malignant tumour" (p. 55, p. 233). Although MacKay has never mentioned one wrong thing that Elborn has done, he says, "I regard you as a conniving and unprincipled man, and consider your influence pernicious" (p. 190). This remark makes sense only if MacKay is projecting his own evil and madness into a being of his own creation, as when MacKay comments paranoically that "he [Elborn] appears to desire violence!" (p. 233). Whatever feelings or human characteristics MacKay discounts at any moment seem to be projected into Elborn. When one canoe of men, including Gustave, is swamped, all the men with the exception of Elborn are depressed (p. 81). When MacKay swerves from strict rationality and begins to show feeling for people and concern for justice, Elborn mocks him: "Are you forgetting that your success will be measured in furs, and in furs only? . . . Let me remind you of Antoninus, my dear MacKay: A clear mind, a clear resolve, and no watery affection to trouble either!" (p. 116). Obviously MacKay does feel that there is something more important than collecting furs for the Company, but he cannot admit this to himself. For instance, he is extremely angry when Elborn remarks upon MacKay's deviation from principle when he labours for three days and nights to save a sick Indian child, a girl who will never grow up to be a hunter of fur-bearing animals (p. 187).

On the other hand, Elborn often serves as the embodiment of conscience and good sense. When MacKay demands that Elborn "give his heart" to the endeavours of the Company, Elborn admits that he, like MacKay, can never quit being in the service of the Company because of their common schooling (that is, because of their conditioning in the values of their society of which the Company is a microcosm); even if he were to join the

Indians, he would inevitably "spread our foolishness like a pestilence among them, and so remain in the Company's service" (p. 191). There are only two ways out of this service, Elborn says: death and laughter. He has chosen the latter. He thinks the idea of success is absurd, lacks belief in the goals of the Company (and perhaps in western civilization as a whole), and knows the implications of what he is doing. MacKay will not laugh because he thinks it irresponsible and undignified, and by implication he has chosen death in not choosing laughter. According to Elborn, MacKay, who does believe in the Company, is more dangerous: ". . . men who believe that they must believe; you will always be successful, and your success will prove disastrous . . . because you must believe you are in control. And you cannot stop. . . . I know you, and alas, I am part of you" (p. 192).

MacKay regards Elborn as "out of rhythm" with the aims of the Company and is determined to have him removed. Four times MacKay asks that Elborn be removed from the post, but his requests are ignored. Finally on May 13 he gets a letter from Grand Portage asking him to journey there to talk "of a Mr. Elborn" (p. 235). This letter makes it seem that Elborn is no more than MacKay's "shadow" or "double" and has no existence in himself. Duff would assume that MacKay is mad when he refers to a non-existent person; at first MacKay could be ignored, but once the madness is seen to continue, he would have to be removed from his post. MacKay must recognize this; and when he reads from Aurelius the last night at Frog Lake, he sees the words: "You are cast aside, away from the natural unity. Nature made you a part, and you have cut yourself off. . . . You may unite yourself once more" and leaves out of account the fact that this is an exhortation "to acquiesce to fate" (p. 235). He takes a few belongings and tools and escapes into the fog to join the woman in Miskobenasa's camp. He has realized that it is he who is "out of rhythm" with life.

Miskobenasa's mother tells MacKay to choose an Indian woman to live with "and rid yourself of shadows" (p. 221). And in fact when he does this, Elborn vanishes from his life for the time being. At first he is still haunted by Elborn and is sure that Elborn has followed him so that he cannot be alone with the woman. If it is true that Elborn is indeed part of MacKay, he can never be banished. However, while the Indian woman stays with MacKay, the passionate side of his life is fulfilled and Elborn is quiet and invisible; but once she leaves, Elborn surfaces again and mocks MacKay's efforts to live by himself in the wilderness apart from the woman. Elborn is the passionate side of MacKay and exists and reappears only when MacKay denies that passion is an essential element in man, that man is an animal. MacKay would like to forget this and pretend that man is completely rational, but Elborn won't let him; he won't let MacKay forget that he "once entered a labyrinth of your own devising, and that the woman on whom you relied betrayed you and left you to claw your way in darkness" (p. 264). What Elborn says here could apply to both Kathleen and the Indian woman. MacKay has been left alone for the second time, and for the second time he vows never to succumb to passion again but rather to be rational and self-sufficient. However, as long as he lives, Elborn will also exist; and when MacKay shoots Elborn as he lies sleeping, MacKay actually shoots himself (p. 266).

1.3 MacKay must choose between the contrasting values and technologies of the North American Indian, who lives in a past or passing environment, and his own, which have been brought from Europe. He does not want to make such a choice and decides instead to use western technology and values to "improve" upon Indian civilization and create for himself "a middle ground," a pastoral world of the type favoured by the eighteenth-century English gentleman. His failure to establish "a middle ground," however, might indicate that all such efforts outside of imagination or art are doomed to fail.

In their last conversation Elborn's most painful taunt is that

MacKay has been unable to choose between the Company and the Indians and has been left alone with nothing. This is the state to which he has been reduced in his attempt to make for himself "a middle way" between European civilization and the civilization of the North American Indian. The choice MacKay has been unable to make hinges on the technologies of the two civilizations and the values that are a part of them. The difference in attitude toward technology that the Indian and the European have is summed up in the incident where Shongwashe, the local chieftain at Frog Lake, and MacKay exchange gifts. Shongwashe's gift is a canoe: "I give you this canoe, believing it will teach you to know our country," he says (p. 161). MacKay gives the chief a gun and powder: "I told him that these were intended to help him make better use of his country so that we could know prosperity together" (p. 161). The essential difference between the gifts and between the givers is summed up in the words "know" and "use": to the European, knowledge without use is frivolous, and use implies exploitation of everything in one's environment for one's own benefit; for the Indian knowledge is enough.

Miskobenasa's tribe is different from Shongwashe's people, who depend on the fur trade and live around the post at Frog Lake, and from the wabenos. Maybe all Indians were like Miskobenasa's tribe before the white man came. MacKay sees that Miskobenasa's people are reserved and dignified and do not fawn upon the whites. All the gifts that MacKay has sent them are returned untouched because "friendship is not purchased" (p. 193). Many of these Indians are scarred by smallpox, and perhaps they keep apart from the white man because they believe that his trade articles are infected. Miskobenasa accuses MacKay of trading in death, of having evil intentions without knowing it, of disguising them as peace and goodness. To MacKay he says, "I cannot stop you from walking upon the earth, for she receives all men," but rejects all European technology (p. 194). His people use wooden or leather containers, not iron pots; they wear leather and fur clothes sewn with a bone needle instead of clothes made from English wool sewn with a steel needle; they use flint knives and spoons and utensils made of horn or wood.

The Indians do not lack technology. They have their own which serves their purposes, but MacKay thinks that the Indian technology should be "improved" or Europeanized and their life of subsistence made stable and comfortable. At one point Miskobenasa bares his chest and shows his scars. Arrows are one of the most important of Indian technologies, and what the chief says about them could be applied to other technologies of theirs: "An arrowhead . . . does not understand the use for which it is intended. But when it has imbedded itself, then the body will absorb it if it must, and find the means to carry it" (p. 219). He could have added that if the body cannot absorb the arrowhead death occurs; the body can absorb only so much before it is utterly overwhelmed. Perhaps he is too polite to say this. But it is true that the technological devices have no understanding of their intended use. They themselves are neither good nor bad; it is their use by man that determines their beneficial or harmful effect.

In his conversations with Miskobenasa, MacKay admits that his greatest fears are of dishonour and failure rather than of death. To Miskobenasa it is all the same. He insists that MacKay's greatest fear is the fear of death:

> I see that you are mad, and will strive to escape your death even for a little time, and that you will cause the death of others, and of the birds of the air and the creatures of the earth, and even of the earth itself, which you will lay waste to keep at bay your fear of

> death. You are all wabenos, you whites, maddened by fires. You flee the enemy within, and fleeing, burn the plains and woodlands. I fear you more than death itself. I fear for my land when you walk upon it, and for the creatures when you cast your eyes upon them. (p. 218)

To prolong his own life the white man is willing to destroy other life, and with his highly developed technologies he is able to do this. Miskobenasa claims that the white man even smells of death, or perhaps more accurately, of the fear of death. When MacKay denies this and says, "I smell of the Company and its goods," Miskobenasa's son-in-law shouts angrily, "It is the same thing!" (p. 218). The Company and its goods are the white man's way of outwitting death for the time being, of erecting honour and success as the ultimate goals of the good life. For the Indian, the Company and its goods signify the death of their way of life.

The success of the Company depends on the rape of the wilderness, and people with the attitudes and values of MacKay are essential to ensure that success. MacKay voices the Company policy when he says, "I am resolved that there is no beaver in the land but shall leave his hide in my store-room!" (p. 159). Thus, the goal of his "journey in" is beaver: "So I have narrowed down my purpose, and beaver are constantly in my thoughts " (p. 160). Because the Indians are not in the habit of killing more than they need, his problem will be how to induce more killing of animals to make more profit for the Company. Profit is the key:

> this curious animal has become for me a sign of how I must grasp the country and extract from it the wealth . . . we get our price and make our profit--for these reasons we have skewered this country like a fat ham from Quebec to Athabasca. . . . I perceive that simplicity prevails, that crooked lines are best made straight, and intentions clarified to a single point. Therefore I am determined on beaver and success, and shall do what I must to obtain them both. (p. 160)

To Miskobenasa, the beaver and all other animals are his brothers, and when he must kill them for food and clothing he does so sparingly and with gratitude.

Besides their refusal to exploit animals, the Indians seem to lack other qualities that are essential to an appreciation of European civilization or to the development of one like it. For instance, the children are indifferent to MacKay's stories of ships, cities, and palaces. Time, too, in the accurately measured sense, is meaningless as is the concept of progress:

> Men, women and children lack the sense of order provided by a belief in progress, for they share a naive and vague doctrine of repetition, linked to the regenerating earth; this prevents their acquiring a proper history, or forming more than the most simple expectations. (p. 220)

The Indians are much like the voyageurs of whom MacKay wrote: "Like children too they lack the true sense of continuity and sequential time . . . Written records and true accountings mean nothing to them" (p. 50). They live for the present moment with no thought of the future:

> Such an outlook I find prevalent among those who have lived long with the Indians, and I perceive that it is in the Company's interest to encourage such simplicity in them, since it increases their dependence. The present can be bought cheap with a pipe, or a pint of rum, or, perhaps, a woman. (p. 158)

The European idea of success in business depends on people having a concept of future time and regarding that concept as important to their lives. However, those simple people who do not have this sophisticated concept can easily be taken advantage of by the successful businessman. If the Indians had a "sense of time" and knew how to keep accounts, MacKay would consider them civilized in the European manner and respect them. A "sense of continuity and sequential time" is necessary to a concept of history and progress, and on a more mundane level it is essential in business enterprise as we know it.[3] Written words (for letter, orders, journals, etc.) and book-keeping are needed in business, and for MacKay business success seems equivalent to civilization. The orders from his company are "to trade with the Indian at all times in the Company's best interest, and at all times to keep a true accounting of his transactions," and MacKay intends to carry out these orders (pp. 55-56).

Rationality, as we have seen, is important, and another quality that MacKay thinks necessary to the civilized man is stoicism. Rather than complain like a pig led out to slaughter, Aurelius says, "It is a prerogative bestowed on the rational life alone to yield voluntarily to whatever befalls us" (p. 158). MacKay calls this attitude to life rational, but it could just as well be called stupid and fatalistic. Why yield voluntarily to something that can be changed with some effort, and what is wrong with showing displeasure with an existing state of affairs? Why not at least go down fighting like Gustave does? In any case, MacKay does not regard the Indians' stoicism and fatalism in the face of hardship as admirable or rational; in his mind only his own stoicism and fatalism are. In fact, MacKay's own attitude toward effort and acquiescence is ambivalent; he himself sometimes favours acquiescence and sometimes exerts effort to change the way things are to what he sees as a better way. Aurelius' advice concerning Miskobenasa's stubborn refusal of European technology would be: "When you have come upon a true man living in harmony with Nature, kill him if you cannot endure him. For he will choose death rather than change the manner of his life" (p. 222). But even Aurelius as an authority raises more questions than he answers. What good does it do to kill that man? It would be more sensible to imitate him, or learn from him. Also if he is living in harmony with nature, he is doing no one any harm that must be "endured." Because MacKay bases his philosophy of life on such vague, faulty pronouncements, he does no better in finding a satisfactory way to live than if he had no guide at all.

Miskobenasa's life in harmony with nature is not to MacKay's liking. To him improvements are necessary, and improvements require European technology. After a few days in the Indian camp MacKay comes to the idea of "a middle ground" which is an indispensible element of pastoralism of the classical type. He observes that

> these [Indians] enjoy an independence from the Company and its goods . . . and yet their subsistence is so primitive that their conscious self-deprivation of even the most trivial amenities, such as metal utensils and woolens, must seem wilful even to an impartial observer. Surely a middle ground exists between the savage state to which they have reverted and adamantly maintain, and the abuses and excesses of civilization which they deplore. (pp. 219-20)

But the question here is, can the Indians accept the good things of European civilization without having the bad things thrust upon them too? It never enters MacKay's mind that European civilization should modify itself by taking the good from the civilization of the North American Indian; even though his motive for suggesting "the middle ground" seems admirable, he is still guilty of imperialism. In addition, although the balance he suggests would probably be best for everyone, perhaps it is not possible for most people to achieve it. While he and others would be enjoying a life of "the middle ground," what sort of life would the makers of the woolens and metal utensils (and the miners of the metal, too) have in England? MacKay doesn't consider questions of this kind.

Although MacKay has run away from his responsibilities as a company factor, he cannot leave his values and culture behind. He sees a small plateau and wants to explore it because it looks like a good place to build. The Indians don't build. He notices that a good harvest of wild rice would mean food all winter:

> Yet they will do nothing to cultivate this plant in shallows where there is a likelihood of its flourishing but where Nature has not seen fit to propagate it; by such means they could ensure a surplus of this staple, and their refusal to do so appears a childish improvidence. (p. 256)

However, the Indians don't believe in "helping" nature. They do not seek to change the land; they want to live with it as it is. Although some tribes such as the Hurons had more permanent villages and did some small-scale planting, these people are a wandering tribe that takes up its tents and goes where the food is. Farming would change their way of life drastically, and it would entail an entirely different philosophy of the relation between man and nature. Miskobenasa sees that simple food-gathering is the best way of life and that to farm is to become a slave to the land. But, of course, no civilization as we know it would be possible without permanent cities and the large-scale farming that they depend on.

MacKay's ideal, "a middle way . . . between this savage life and the decadence of Europe," is an admirable one (p. 257). It is one that we can wholeheartedly endorse perhaps because we, like MacKay, are all "halfway men" wanting the best of both worlds--the simplicity of the romantic pastoral life and the comfort and security of a life improved by technology. The worst of both worlds is not to our liking--the rigor and harshness of life in the wilderness and the impersonal, crowded, often polluted existence in urban centres. Long before the present time, as given in the journey of Paul and Liv Henry into the wilderness, Miskobenasa sees the impossibility of "a middle way," and he seems to understand the philosophy behind European man's desire for such a way of life. It stems from the practice of dividing everything into two and then assuming a conflict between them that must be reconciled. The Indian tends to see the parts of a person's life as necessary elements of a whole; in fact, he might never see the parts and consider only the whole. For instance, when MacKay quotes Aurelius, "If a man were sane his every action would be in accord both with Nature and with reason," Miskobenasa replies, "If a man were sane . . . he would have no need to reconcile these two!" (p. 257). For a sane man, or a sane society, there would be no division or opposition between nature and reason with man having to choose between them or to reconcile them. According to Miskobenasa, MacKay has been unable to make a choice and wants to pursue a kind of life that cannot exist: "you have gone apart from your people and their dream of reason, but you have not yet come to us. You are a man journeying in a fog. . . . Stay if you will, for you are welcome. Or go. But let us not speak further of this path which does not exist" (p. 257). MacKay doesn't agree. He separates himself and his woman from the rest of her people and tries to make "a middle way" possible. He tries to do what the narrator's father in Surfacing attempts: to make an island refuge. MacKay's aim is "to conduct his life in a manner neither so perilous as the way of the Indian nor so smug and corrupt as that of white men and their women!" (p. 258).

The plan is that MacKay will build his cabin with the tools he has, and his woman will hunt for nuts, berries, and roots for the winter. She is incredulous when he starts toppling trees with his axe in preparation for building the cabin. She says that she prefers a portable lodge of skins "which was not a cage, which did not require the killing of great trees" (p. 258). She doesn't even listen to his excited plans for building and for storing food for the winter so the two of them can be self-sufficient. To her this seems like a destructive way of life, and as a gesture to tell MacKay what she thinks, she presents him with a basket of toadstools. When he continues describing his expectations for the finished cabin, she tells him that his building and writing for posterity spoil their life in the present. She has no "expectations" for the future; she simply lives. When he explains that he "laboured for her benefit as well as for [his] own," she answers:

> No. It is not for my well-being that you would imprison me, and so imprison yourself. It is not for me that you must build such things to continue after you are gone, yet never live. It is very sad, that you must write in your books what you believe has happened to you. It is very sad that you cannot see the evidence on every side of what life is, and strength, and pride, but you must invent your own ideas and exist by them and die. And it is sad that you cannot see what a woman is, but must use her as you would an implement, or an excuse for the evidence of your own disease. (pp. 259-60)

Her views show primitivism in the extreme. To her a permanent, straight-sided cabin is a prison and his journal is a way to "tell lies to yourself" (p. 258).[4]

Western civilization is based largely on things that last (buildings, books, etc.); the civilization of the nomadic Indian tribes of North America does not. The differing concepts of civilization, of course, require different technologies. The Indian woman believes that life in the present is devalued if one is always thinking of being remembered after death. Also, she feels that to a man of MacKay's ideology she is no more than a food-gathering "implement" or a living body upon whom he projects his own prejudice and "disease." MacKay can't bear to be "brought to task" by one "whom I had sought to elevate in some degree above the savage state" (p. 260). It is clear that he hasn't learned anything from the Indian woman and that he has never really felt that she has anything to teach him. By accusing her of "reducing" him to animal state, he regresses to the position he maintained before he met her. In his anger he tries to rape her but finds that there is no way that he can debase her. However, this act shows the woman what MacKay is, and she leaves him to go back to her people.

After she leaves, MacKay goes through stages of "degeneration" and he loses his "civilization." He neglects his journal for six weeks. He forgets to wind his watch; it stops completely, he loses track of time, and all days become the same to him. He works to the point of exhaustion every day and even works at night by the light of fires. Because winter is upon him and he is without help, the building is not as planned; it does not meet his "expectations." He had planned a two- or three-storey structure, but what he finally makes is a hovel close to the ground, with no chimney because of lack of material and tools so the smoke rises through a hole in the roof as it does in an Indian lodge. To judge by the building he might as well have stayed with Miskobenasa's people. He must realize that he has failed to bring civilization to the wilderness and to create "a middle way" for himself. He ends by burning Aurelius because the Stoic's answers are found to be insufficient: "Reason and Nature! How glib was his prattle concerning them; how forced were his reconciliations!" (p. 262).

However, his time with the Indians in the wilderness and then by himself has not really changed his life and values. When Elborn reappears, he says about the cabin, "I might have expected more from you, my poor fellow" (p. 263). And yet the building is more like a "little prison" or an animal's lair with MacKay "like an animal burrowed deep for winter, in a state that is neither life nor death. . . . like an armoured animal" (p. 263). As a counterpart to the Indian woman's indifference to MacKay's "expectations," Elborn provides mockery and points out that MacKay is short of food, out of tobacco, and is dressed in tatters. Elborn taunts him about his poor state: if MacKay were with Miskobenasa's tribe, he would be eating deer meat and have intelligent company and the love of the woman. Alone he has nothing. Perhaps, then, civilization depends on groups of people and their life together rather than on buildings and artifacts, but MacKay can't live with others, and he does not seem to value this aspect of human existence.

Because he is "afraid to choose" one way of life over another, he left the company and then he left the Indians (p. 264). Angry at his powerlessness and the futility of his life, MacKay retreats to his earliest position:

> They are filthy, wilful savages! . . . With nothing to teach me! Nothing! For they lack all interest in their own betterment! They are devoid of shame and reason! Their women are no different from the rest, mere vessels of depravity and lust. . . . they shall be destroyed! (p. 265)

Elborn replies, "And tell me, MacKay, when that has been accomplished, as I have no doubt it will be, will the Company then be victorious?" MacKay has no answer; in despair he thinks, "I saw it would go on as long as life. Yes. As long as life and men" (p. 265). He probably means that the conflict between the two ways of life--between two sets of values, between living with nature and living outside it and exploiting it--would continue forever, or as long as man exists. The struggle would go on as long as passion, isolated and repressed, is divorced from reason or until a time when this "bastion of mind" and the technological world it creates destroy themselves (p. 188).

1.4 Nature battles for survival against modern (nineteenth-century mechanistic) technology in the twentieth-century part of Drew's novel. The enemies of nature are legion: except for Miro, most of the male characters accept the values of technological progress and success in business until death--death that is blamed on modern technology--strikes someone close to them.

The modern part of the novel shows that this conflict cannot go on forever, that white man's technology has largely destroyed the possibility of choosing a way of life similar to that of Miskobenasa's people. Now the wilderness is used as an escape from urban life and a place to make money. Cars and "antiseptic" highways make such an escape possible for many people, and nature becomes a "green diversion" (p. 5). In northern Ontario there is the "blight of Sudbury" and Sault Ste. Marie which seems to be an oasis of civilization, but on the whole the wilderness appears to have the upper hand in the battle against man-made "improvements":

> The buildings hunker down; nature moves back against them, sending skirmishers of blueberry, hazel, hemlock and jackpine in through unkempt fences. They surround broken hulls and discarded machines; they push up through forgotten auto rims; they skirt the fringes of last year's brave garden. This autumn the milkweed will sift its seeds against the insulbrick walls of the house itself. (p. 6)

However, the pall of smoke from the pulp mills and the water pollution, which is caused by the mills, mark the price one has to pay for newspapers, magazines, and books. Here civilization is seen to be the enemy. At other times in the novel the reader gets the idea that no matter what man does the wilderness will survive. What Drummond MacKay left behind, his pistol, his cabin, and his journal, amount to nothing when compared to the strength and endurance of the wilderness. His pistol is a rusted relic which no one can use, his journal is burned page by page or scattered in the wind as though it is definitely too late for anyone to read it and profit from the reading, and the place where he built his cabin is now a rectangle of newer growth.

The wilderness may endure, but man will not unless he modifies his destructive behaviour; and World War II marks the beginning of the end, Drew suggests. In The Wabeno Feast World War II provides the backdrop for Paul Henry's boyhood and that of his friends, Miro Balch, Gerry Rattray, and Franklin Hook, as well as the lives of other characters in the novel. For instance, Narah Hale, the scoutmaster's wife, keeps a scrapbook of the war and includes

> only the photographs of blasted earth. . . . She seemed compelled by ruin and by the landscapes of disaster . . . Here, the remnants of a forest fuzzy in drifting smoke, consisting only of shattered stumps and grotesque arms pleading to a black sky; here a vineyard uprooted and strewn with rubble; and there the earth itself, the raw earth churned seedless by treads, by wheels and engines, by the scurrying boots of infantry. (p. 13)

The war gave meaning to life for both soldiers and civilians; and although peace is declared, Narah knows that war will go on: "she knew the game would curve insidiously, and adapt itself, and continue under a different name, perhaps, but with the same players. With exactly the same players" (p. 14). The war now will be against nature, an all-out war to get what can be got out of the forests of the north. The scenes of war are not much different from downtown Toronto with its "gouged earth [where] nothing would grow in that earth again; not ever. At least, not until the buildings themselves came crashing down" (p. 141). Going into the heart of the city is like entering a dark mine; and beneath the trees of the northern forests are mines from which profitable materials can be extracted.

It is rather strange that Narah is the one who functions as the voice of doom early in the novel since she is a kind of embodiment of passion and sexual vitality, but perhaps that is precisely the type of person who would see that no time will be wasted in introducing war technology into "everyday" life simply because it is the same people, with values unchanged, who were at war and are now at "peace." This is what Drew seems to be suggesting. Narah's special function is indicated by a birthmark on her throat "the shape of a small frog's foot and the colour of shore mud and humus" (p. 48). When the four boys return from a disastrous canoe trip organized by Fred Hale, she is worried that they will always "fear the wildness" and never "go back in again" (p. 49, p. 48).

The trip out into the unspoiled wilderness northwest of Lake Superior in August 1946--a place of "vastness, mystery, treasure to be won"--is meant to teach the boys, in Fred's words, "to seize leisure manfully, to subdue the unknown and wrestle into submission whatever threatened them" (p. 16). His words, "we're going in, eh? Finally" are an ironic echo of MacKay's and Elborn's (p. 35). He is even less capable of "going in" than MacKay was; he and the four boys go in and get hopelessly lost even though they have the aid of maps and compass, and finally they have to "burn an island" twice before they are rescued by plane. It is on this trip that Paul finds MacKay's rusty pistol and the outline of a rotten cabin hidden by moss and trees.

This trip, however, does not seem to cause Paul to be afraid of the wilderness as Narah feared, unless fear can be seen as the basis of exploitation. He becomes a pulp mill executive. His career starts first as a summer job at Bob Mansfield's pulp mill: "He ran a machine that stripped the bark from logs . . . Each day his machine barked scores of logs, and his days were full of its throbbing and of the smell of torn spruce" and the "screaming of the machine" (p. 60, p. 62). If he agrees to study commerce and finance at university, Mansfield guarantees Paul a job during the summers and after graduation. Mansfield says, humanities are fine for a "hobby" but are to be kept separate from work because "I want a businessman and not a bloody poet!" (p. 67). Paul accepts this judgement, and his suggestions for modernizing the mill with chemicals, new equipment, trucks, and selling policy make the business even more successful than it was before.

At the university in Toronto Paul's professor of English literature is Kenneth Malcolmson, a man who knew his father in the war. Paul's mother had described her husband as a "gentleman" and a "poet," but Malcolmson calls him a "half-way man," "only half a dreamer, reluctant to go the whole way" (p. 121, p. 122). Perhaps Paul is a half-way man, too, without knowing it. After all he is the only commerce student to pick Thoreau as the subject of a term paper. In any case, it is clear that Paul must repress a part of himself to be successful in the pulp and paper business. Later Malcolmson tells Paul, when he is becoming a success at the Mansfield mills, "There's nothing half-way about you, is there? You're on the spiral staircase. Racing down" (p. 164). To be a success in business is not important to Malcolmson; in fact, such success is a delusion. He values his books and manuscripts and at one point has to defend them against attack by young hoodlums, but he does not seem to believe in progress or the permanency of civilization. When Paul says that he likes Toronto, for instance, the old man replies:

> Ever the optimist. The blind optimist like your father. No doubt you would also have enjoyed the other triumphs of progress, conveniently forgotten. . . .What was Chichen Itza against the forest? . . . Imagine the sands drifting through Persepolis. (pp. 123-24)

He is suggesting that the same thing will happen to North American civilization and that people like Paul are hastening the process. In his opinion civilization is a fragile thing in the face of chaos, a chaos kept at bay only briefly by technologies of various kinds. People in the city are "prisoners. . . . All busy in separate cubicles. Measuring. Organizing. Terrified by chaos. Pretending it doesn't exist, in them, all around them" (pp. 122-23). Drummond MacKay had the same fear out in the wilderness and went mad, but such madness is equally possible in the wilderness of the modern city. It takes Paul time and a personal tragedy to understand this.

While Paul Henry is becoming a successful business executive, his friend, Franklin Hook, is making a career as a cinematographer. His obsession with taking pictures started when he was a boy, and as a TV cameraman his work is his whole life. It seems to be more important to him than his wife or son, and it is no surprise that his marriage ends very quickly in divorce. His wife is a beautiful model, and he uses their honeymoon to photograph Mona "mostly in natural settings, stressing the affinity between woman and nature . . . The theme of allurement and regeneration" (p. 143). Mona is simply camera fodder: he sees her as a creature of nature, a role she definitely does not want, and he seems to marry her mainly so that he can have a professional photographer's model on hand. Franklin is always the cool recording "eye" preoccupied with technique; even when he sees the newscast announcing his son's death,

> he watched the editing of the clip, watched the timing, assessed the tone of the announcer's voice, saw how the segment might be improved, and only then, through a spread of technical considerations, did the name of the school settle on his consciousness. (p. 207)

He does not allow his feelings to show in his camerawork. As he films the demonstration which ends with Miro being shot, he and his camera become one:

> you kept cool, didn't get involved. . . . Don't think . . . Just react. Just get the action. . . . That was what you had to do if you stayed in the business. You didn't worry about causes. . . . You recorded. Coolly, ironically, uncritically as if you were the lens itself, you recorded. (p. 244)

Franklin's specialty is wildlife documentaries, and he prefers making movies about animals rather than about people. The headmaster tells him that his son said,

> you were the best cinematographer of wildlife in North America, and that someday people would turn to your films as they do now to history books, to see what those animals had been like. . . . if you ever did decide to make a film about people, you would show them like lemmings, going to the sea. (pp. 211-12)

Franklin had once enjoyed hunting animals, but one day he simply couldn't kill any more and stopped being a hunter and started photographing them instead. Perhaps when all the animals are killed, people will have to resort to pictures and movies in order to see what they were like; it is horrifying that Franklin's son assumes that such a situation is inevitable.

After studying law in Toronto, Gerry Rattray becomes a very successful lawyer. His complete self-interest makes him a ready student of business law which teaches that "your competitor is your enemy. Ideally, you would kill him, but the Law restrains you. . . . 'Ethics' are shadows in which weak men hide themselves" (p. 119). It is Gerry whom the company chooses to defend its interests at the inquest that investigates the deaths of twenty-seven boys (Paul's son and Franklin's son are two of them) from gas poisoning. Emphasizing Gerry's moral failings, Drew makes him a lover of technology--his car especially--and a man who refuses to grow up. It seems that Gerry loves his Austin Healey more than he loves any woman. He has "a love affair with milliseconds" and thinks: "Synchronization! How beautiful that was! . . . To perceive the moment, the instant, the splintering second when the time was right, and to give oneself utterly to it, to subordinate oneself and yet control" (p. 180). Miro once accuses him "of perversity. Automobile necrophilia," but Gerry points out that "it is very impolite to criticize other people's methods of self-destruction" (p. 179, p. 200). In his life the "right time" was when he was a young man playing football at university. That's what he wants again: to be an adolescent playing a game that has simple, easily-followed rules. His nostalgia for adolescence, a time when life seemed simpler, extends as far as him wanting his wife, Janet, to be an eighteen year-old cheerleader again. Gerry does "not believe in suffering" so when life in the city becomes unbearable he plans his own death (p. 182). He wants a graceful death and skydiving, which is one of his hobbies, makes it possible: "We'll do this like an ordinary jump, with everything clean. . . . He wanted a free sky, empty of all but the Cessna and his own body, gliding home" (p. 224). When he jumps, "the earth spun around and over him, as winding him in a grey cocoon of wind"; and as he plunges down, he recalls the most vivid experience of his life (p. 227). He remembers his youthful sexual experience with Narah (the same as Paul's with her) in the woods, of course, in the manner of D.H. Lawrence, and there was nothing ever so good again, he says: "To have been eighteen. To have been in love, complete. And then to have let it go, let it go in fragments and become unsure" (pp. 228-29). His last words are "unity" and "Narah." Clearly he is a person who cannot accept growing up and growing old and facing all the problems of life.

If, in their own ways, Franklin and Gerry and Paul can be seen as lovers of technology, Miro Balch is a hater of technology with an even more virulent hatred than the narrator of Surfacing has. One vivid example of his hatred occurs when he watches Julie, a professional model, pose for nude photos; for him it is like a scene out of Hell: "Suddenly the lights swarmed upon Miro as if they had come alive and ravenous. On their ladders the technicians swayed like demons" (p. 147). To him the camera is a "goddam d-dildo!" and Julie is no better than a prostitute who can be enjoyed by many men (p. 148). Miro is a dedicated scholar in a "marvellous glass world" who is interested only in biology and Kropotkin (p. 138). When he starts out, he believes that science can create a utopia, but he soon becomes disillusioned. Because his field is biology, he becomes concerned about pollution; when he examines an osprey dead from DDT, he concludes that "the bird had died so that fat men could be fatter, so that crops could be harvested with less inconvenience to machines" (p. 174). But man's inventions will catch up with him, and it is only a matter of time before what happened to the bird will happen to people. In his opinion it is too late to talk about solutions to the problem: "There has been no way . . . since our great agricultural revolution, our fine technological advances, our great breakthroughs in medicine. . . . There is nothing we can do but speed it all up!" (p. 174).

To hear Miro speak one would think that there have never been technological developments that have helped mankind, but he is probably correct in his overall analysis; even some technologies that benefit the individual can be seen to be harmful in the long run to people as a whole. He comes to a point where he sees that ethics, good manners, individual rights, free enterprise, humanism, and law are fakes; they are simply ways of keeping the "illusion of choice" where there is no real choice, "ways of spreading death through time" (p. 200). Above all he wants "a clean land," but he and the students who support him are very romantic in seeing that the only value is what is "away from men" (p. 201, p. 202). Perhaps they are guilty of "a mere excess of idealism," but as Paul says, "At least he acted. At least he outgrew conscience" (p. 203, p. 175). When they are holed up in the Zoology Building on campus "Dedicated to the Understanding of Life", they are attacked by tear gas; sharp shooters are stationed at strategic places, and a man in a helicopter with speakers says, "Listen to reason, please" (p. 243). However, Miro is past listening to anyone and is shot resisting his attackers. As the ambulance takes him away, his last words are "m-master of monsters" (p. 246). Perhaps he means that as master of the universe, man is no more than the ruler of monsters.

What makes Paul Henry realize that his work and his way of life are wrong, that the implications of such a life are indeed monstrous, is the death of his son. He is one of the twenty-seven boys who die of hydrogen sulphite poisoning during a temperature inversion as they play in the schoolyard of their private school in Toronto. Gerry, representing the company whose plant emitted the deadly gas, explains during the inquest that "in the processing of essential gases such accidents are, regrettably, always possible" (p. 196). Liv Henry (Liv=life), the Mother and Life-force, "stands like an exclamation mark after our complicity" as she speaks at the inquest:

> people are consumed this way by the things they have made essential. I know that it will not stop, that it will go on and on, that we shall make new horrors, thinking we can contain them . . . What happened to us? What kind of animal have we become that in all our wisdom and culture we create and cherish the very forces that destroy us? (p. 197)

In her opinion we have become slaves to our technologies. However, it is only once they are invented that we see that they can get out of hand. There are many technologies that we could not and would not do without, but it is true that foresight in regard to possible dangers is often lacking. Liv is the voice speaking against reason and technology. We are told that the people she speaks to find "her perception . . . inadmissible to any civilized system of logic" (p. 198). Her vision of the end of things is "a perfect machine, a suspended sculpture, perhaps a sphere, immobile and alone on the sterile earth" (p. 198).

Who, then, is responsible? Franklin says, "We all killed them, didn't we? . . . With poison. With tolerance. With apathy" (p. 199). Each one of the people at the inquest is to blame because he or she was not concerned with the problem of pollution until a personal loss occurred. However, they do not realize that every single day more than twenty-seven children die tragically of some preventable cause and nothing is done. Paul and his paper company are poisoners, killers, "one of them" (p. 199). His solution is to quit and "go back" somehow; "and we must forget," Liv adds (p. 199). Such a solution seems impossible and, if possible, wrong. To forget or escape from the horrible present by going back in time to where the technology is simpler and the mistakes haven't been made yet--a seemingly universal pastoral urge--is probably impossible; and since it is impossible, the strong desire for such an escape into the past (or to a place removed from present problems) does nothing to solve the problems and could even add to them.

1.5 Urban industrial society crumbles after the ensuing ecological crisis, and Paul and Liv Henry escape to the wilderness in northern Ontario. On their way they meet several people who represent the various ways that human beings have chosen to interact with the natural world. It is clear that both civilizations, Indian and white, have been destroyed, but whether an escape to the wilderness is the only or the best answer to the problems of modern technology is doubtful. Drew evades the questions that such an attempted escape brings to the reader's mind.

In the four months after Michael Henry's death it seems that everything has become poisoned, and Liv and Paul decide to escape to the northern woods. Toronto is not a safe place to be. The streets are unrepaired, lights are broken, subways are closed because there is a shortage of electrical power, public clocks are stopped, the few private cars that are still operating don't stop for anyone. Older people continue finding some meaning in old commitments, but youths turn to drugs and violence; and because they don't value history or time, the end of civilization is at hand. For instance, at one point Malcolmson sits in a park and three young hoodlums attack him and wrench from him one volume of MacKay's manuscript and maliciously tear it up. They care nothing about "one man's truth" (p. 239). Drew doesn't say whether these young people will form Indian-like tribes for survival or whether death is inevitable. Life in the city has become a matter of each person for himself: "people . . . passed with heads down wishing to avoid all contact, even a meeting of the eyes. They moved at a scampering pace that was neither walk nor run, but which reminded Paul of the trotting of scavenger dogs, each with his private meat" (pp. 268-69). There is much unemployment, and floods promise a bad crop. Because of pollution in the upper atmosphere, the temperature has been going down four or five degrees each year for several years. The world birthrate is reported to be one every .8 seconds and accelerating. All birth control programs are a failure, and an expert predicts that the underdeveloped countries will invade North America within a decade (p. 181).

With such grim prospects facing them, Liv and Paul decide to go "all the way" north of Lake Superior, the only "territory" left to "light out" for in the old Huck Finn way. This man and woman are expert canoists, in good health, and not old. Their alternative to staying in the city would not be available to most people. In their canoe they have a tent, an axe, two rifles, matches, and food for a couple of months: "everything [Paul] held important from the other world and all he would now take from it" (p. 150). They wear moccasins, but it is not clear whether they know enough about Indian technology to live like the Indians did once they get to their destination or whether they will live like tourists camping out.

They go as far as they can by train and then continue by canoe. They pass deserted buildings and burned settlements. They avoid most of them and keep out of sight by paddling far from shore; that must indicate that they fear attack by people on shore or don't want to be asked where they are heading. When they get to Sable Creek, they notice that it is "already dead . . . Dead and beginning to crumble," but they stop here to see if anyone they know remains alive (p. 68). The train no longer goes to Sable Creek. No gas is available in town, and cars are left abandoned everywhere. Shops are boarded up or left open to anyone. Many people cook food over open fires. There is a smokey haze hanging over the silent town, and the machines at the pulp mill are described as gross animals:

> Hulking machines frowned as if maddened by the inactivity. Their bared thighs and sinews gleamed in readiness, and the switches which had once activated them held a crisp, clench-fist salute in ranks along the walls. A nest of cables sprouted from the head of each and twined lasciviously into the upper shadows. But all was halted, hushed, the monstrous revels frozen. Gross teeth, upraised paws, curled fins, tissues of web and meshing, winding ligaments, all the stark and skinless shapes of a diseased imagining hung listening. (pp.68-69)

In these shadows they meet an old man who appears to have "a grotesque swelling, a tumour" at his waist which, closer up, is seen to be a watchman's timeclock (p. 69). He is devoted to his clock and believes that the "bad time" is temporary; and even though there is no work being done, he faithfully makes his rounds and punches the clock to keep up his "perfect record." Thus, he maintains his hold on civilization.

Rose Stacey, the seventy year-old librarian and former mistress of Paul's grandfather, still keeps the library open. As the custodian of culture and civilization she refuses to allow anyone to burn books to cook rabbits. She takes this last opportunity to tell Paul about old Michael Henry's discovery of Drummond MacKay's cabin and journal. Henry had wanted to excavate the site properly, but "he certainly didn't want it all exposed again, measured, dated, catalogued, bathed, mounted with neat labels in glass cases saying look! Look! We didn't really die at all! Look how we live on, safe from nature" (pp. 77-78). That had indeed been MacKay's motive for building and writing, but Rose pointed out to Henry that "the cases are in your mind" and advised him to "Just let it be" (p. 78). He went back a few times to see the site, took away the journal but, on the whole, "was content with his restraint" (p. 78). Now for the time that remains to her, Rose will stay in the library: "I shall stay, and read, and keep my books together, and drive out vandals for a while longer. . . . I shall go on giving books to anyone who asks" (p. 78). Loving and respecting both, Rose is the balance between civilization and nature. That both are equally fragile if not cared for is indicated in Liv's and Paul's last view of Sable Creek:

> Behind them, the town lay in the shadow of hills, covered in light smoke, ash-grey like the campfire of a hiding monster, or the char of a failed experiment. Small dark figures sprang, and danced . . . Their cries, sharp but inchoate, grew ever less distinct until they fluttered out like broken mayflies on the lake. (p. 79)

Just outside town they meet Fred Hale paddling his canoe, but he does not see them at once. "His eyes were fixed on some internal calculation" (p. 107). He rows on the lake not because he wants to see the water and trees or wants to get to another place. He practises in order to beat the paddling record of the voyageurs, and his best time, .8 seconds, equals their time. This is an obsession with him, and he resents his practice being interrupted by Liv and Paul. Although he talks about "keeping order," he seems quite mad. Next they meet Ben, the Outfitter, who tells them that no one who "goes in" now will ever come out. He himself has stocked up with fuel and food "like a seige [siege] was comin"

(p. 154). Everything at his camp is in readiness for tourists "so he can pretend as long as possible" that there will be tourists coming again (p. 153). Along with the conventional trophies of hunting and fishing the Outfitter has collected dozens of clocks and watches--all running, all indicating the same time. He has found them in abandoned cottages and cars, and what puzzles him most is why in some cabins he's gone into the only thing smashed is the clock. Paul had given away his watch long before, but now Liv gives hers to Ben; "there was a part of her which let it go reluctantly, although it was against all reason to keep it" (p. 156). Where she is going there is no need for a wristwatch, but she parts with hers reluctantly because measuring time is a foundation stone of western civilization, and even though she doesn't consciously know it, she has been holding on to past habits and values. Collecting clocks and watches is Ben's way of holding on to civilization, on to a belief in a future time, and he is upset when Paul suggests that, since there is no outside authority he can check with, all the clocks could be telling the wrong time and Ben wouldn't know it.

At the river mill they encounter Bob Mansfield. He has enough food, oil, and whiskey for winter and patrols his fort-like mill with a rifle. He is determined to survive and thinks that what Paul and Liv are doing is committing slow suicide--going into the wilderness with less than two months' supply of food and winter coming. Even though Paul did such good work for the pulp company, Mansfield accuses him of being a half-way man like his father: "you were never really with us. Not all the way" (p. 249). Whatever will happen to Paul and Liv, Mansfield is sure that he will survive and work the mill again because he has

> Faith in man. I'll see this mill come back. . . . And next time we won't make the same mistakes . . . We've learned our lesson. And we can adapt . . . we'll keep doin it, s'long

> as we want to live. But you go this other way, givin up, not using the edge Nature gave us, then what hope is're? (pp. 250-51)

In a way he is right: Liv and Paul are giving up on civilization, but he doesn't see that man is in a desperate situation because he has used "the edge Nature gave us" against nature and against himself. Alone in the wilderness but barricaded from it, Mansfield seems to be going mad. He hears the laugh of a woman in the forest, shoots in the direction of the voice and cries out "a single cry of negation in the night" (p. 251). By implication, then, Paul's and Liv's way is to be seen as positive in a world where everyone is dead or preparing for death or finding escape in alcohol and madness.

During their journey into the wilderness, Liv is haunted by memories of Michael's death even though she tries to forget. At one point she has a dream related to her son's death, or to death in general. In it a man, wielding a two-handed mallet, makes a coffin which turns into a book, "a huge book, a record or ledger" (p. 136). This image seems to condemn money-making activities by associating account books with death and perhaps indicating that Michael's death was caused by capitalist greed. Then the dream shifts to a scene with Freudian implications: "She was alone with a machine of the type used to drill wells, and its hammer rose and fell and pierced the earth with yards of steel. And yet the well was sterile" (p. 136). Perhaps it is the machine with its hammer that causes the sterility of the earth. Considering Liv's state of mind and the anti-technological stand of the novel, such an interpretation is a likely one. If man is associated with the victimizing machines and woman with the victimized earth, it takes only a slight shift to the next part of the dream where Liv becomes a hunted victim herself:

> Men thumped their feet on hollow boards. They were muffled hunters searching [for] her, but she was beneath the ice . . . Their shadows crossed above her. They were enemies and she was a hunted thing. They were chopping a hole to reach her. (p. 136)

Here she seems to become a trapped animal at the mercy of man, much as Marian in The Edible Woman feels herself to be a pursued rabbit.

In her grief, and now carrying out the decision to abandon civilization for the wilderness, Liv becomes rather simplistic in her thinking. She remembers Michael's doctor saying that schools are medically undesirable, that "they would crush anything which suggested the animal nature of man" (p. 59). But without schools how would one get to be a doctor with the knowledge to help people? And if they are not satisfactory, why not improve the schools? These questions do not occur to Liv, and she is sorry that she sent Michael to school at all: "I wish we had said no to them, and kept him" (p. 59). It is impossible, however, to keep people from the dangers of life, better to prepare them; and to externalize the danger and place it in a vague "them" might be personally comforting but harmful in general.

Chance, the idea that much is beyond human control or individual control, is one of the most difficult things for people to accept; and technologies of various kinds are an attempt to minimize chance and to increase control. Perhaps this is the reason why Liv takes her son's death so hard; the accident to Michael was random and completely beyond her control. Systems of thought are like technologies and operate with the assumption that to know is to control, but Paul says, "No matter what systems we impose to console ourselves, we'll always know them to be placeboes, finally" (p. 105). Liv clings to the idea of control, and late in the novel she confesses to her husband that she has brought along some pills thinking "they would make the choices easier" (p. 256). He says, "Too easy," and she burns them. But if they are going to die anyway, why not ease the death? Paul, however, seems to be a purist and an idealist; he seems to view a "natural" form of suicide as superior to one aided by technology--unless he really thinks that they can survive, the two of them, and continue living in the wilderness. But actually the likelihood of survival is slight because they lack the technology and skills that the Indians had, and there are only two of them.

And it is clear that the Indians themselves have lost what they had and cannot survive. The last person who sees Paul and Liv is Charlie Redbird, a drunk whose brain has been destroyed by years of drinking shoepolish, perfume, and Sterno; these have left him in a world of his own, "beguiled by visions" (p. 2). He may be a descendent of Miskobenasa, but none of that Indian's civilization remains to Charlie. Miskobenasa would weep to see this twentieth-century Indian wearing a thin plaid jacket and torn boots and eating canned spaghetti. Charlie lives in a shack at Frog Lake Post from which the white hunters and fishermen have gone for good, leaving him completely alone. He is waiting for someone to come and take him home to his people, but as he waits, the only thing he sees is Paul's and Liv's canoe in the distance, so far from shore that they can't hear him call. His gesture as he calls out the magical name "Miskobenasa" is at once a greeting and a farewell (p. 280). Left to die alone, Charlie may well be the last of Miskobenasa's people; and living out a romantic idea in their retreat to the wilderness, the Henrys could be among the last of the white people.

Whether these three people are the last descendents of two civilizations is not clear, but it is probable that the author intends us to think of that possibility. Certainly, unless extreme measures are taken immediately, the human race faces extinction; and according to Drew there is little reason to be optimistic. At one point in the novel Paul muses on how portages had come to be started by animals and then used by human-like creatures and finally by human beings, and states, "We had no right. . . . Yes we did. We made the right. We followed and are followed" (p. 267). In the chain of evolution man is preceded and superseded by other living creatures, Paul thinks, but although this idea is optimistic regarding life as a whole, it is small comfort to anyone who is living at present and trying to see how best to continue living.

Drew himself is very pessimistic in his analysis of the future of our technological world; and because we are quickly killing everything in the natural world, we have come to the point where we must ask:

> how far should one go? Surely there were questions which should not be asked, trips which should not be started, tangles which should not be simplified. Surely some confusions should be left to generate, and if one were wise one would not always look for the way through. (p. 140)

Drew's advice seems to be: "It's better to leave things alone sometimes," "Just let it be," and be "content with . . . restraint" (p. 133, p. 78). However, it is not easy to know what to leave alone, when to be content with restraint: that is the crux of the problem that arises in the meeting of nature and technology. Probably a balance between the two is the desired end, but only in retrospect is it possible to know when that balance has been upset. If the Ojibwa saying "The frog does not drink up the pond in which he lives" is heeded, it becomes all right to drink the water of the pond but not to drink it up (p. 202). However, this provides no guideline when considering whether the pond should be made deeper by using machines of various kinds, whether an alternate water and food supply should be developed by technology, whether any technology should be available to the frog to increase his lifespan and general well-being or to control the number of his offspring, and whether he should be allowed any technological defence in case some other frog comes to take over his pond. When stated in this way the impossibility of an acceptable answer to the problem becomes apparent. Drew sees the problems and dangers of a certain type of technology, but he does not give any satisfactory solution in The Wabeno Feast.

1.6 Drew's short story shows, in a way that the novel doesn't, that extreme nostalgia for a past technology can be futile and even harmful. Here in "Wood" the old technology is the crosscut saw and the new technology is the chainsaw, an example of mechanistic technology. The narrator's obsession with cutting wood with a crosscut saw (even though he has no choice but to use a chainsaw) cuts him off from other people and from the changes involved in living; it imprisons him in memories of his happy childhood, which are closely connected with that outmoded technology. If there is any solution to the problems of modern (mechanistic) technology, Drew sees it as a rather mystical revolution in attitude. Certainly, indulgence in nostalgia for past technologies and past environments is not the answer.

In "Wood", however, he seems to suggest that nostalgia for outmoded technologies and past environments is not the answer. Here the narrator recalls his past life while he is cutting wood. What he remembers with most nostalgia is cutting wood with a crosscut saw with his grandfather forty years ago. As a means of recapturing his happy childhood (a frequent feature of the pastoral) and memories of the harmonious marriage that his grandfather and grandmother had, the narrator moved to the country, built a house, bought a woodlot, and now cuts wood whenever he can. He would like his life to be like that of his grandparents, but the flaw in his expectations is that the world is not like it was then, and his choice of life in the country alienates his wife and children.

Vera, his wife, hates the country and would rather live in an apartment in the city. She calls her husband's project a "harbouring [of]

. . . precious atavisms."[5] He has probably tried to press her into the mould of his grandmother, and she has rebelled. Knitting socks by an open fire is not her idea of heaven. Even before the birth of their son there was a rift between husband and wife, but he had hoped that the "magic" of country life would heal it. But over nineteen years of marriage they have grown further apart. He makes his living in the city and so must commute, and it seems, too, that he has had time for cutting and splitting wood but little for his wife and children. When the narrator's son is old enough to help, he leaves. He wants to live an independent life with no help from his father: "his hostility [was] cold as iron" (p. 81). And his eighteen year-old daughter ignores her father's advice and marries or goes off with a man. Claiming that eighteen of the nineteen years of marriage have been a pretense for her, Vera also leaves.

Like the pastoralist that he is, the narrator had taken it for granted that life in the country is good for children because it is a place where there is no "crime, drugs, crowded schools, pollution, lack of roots" (p. 81). But once his children have grown up and gone, he has to admit that

> moving out had made little difference. Rural schools aped the city, part of that homogenizing which sent gross cars past my woodlot, gross aircraft overhead, visions unspeakably inane wriggling across the screen, and perhaps the city's defences would have been better after all. (pp. 81-82)

Since the city is the place where the children will probably end up, they might as well have been prepared for it.

He is not ready, however, to admit that he has made other mistakes. The narrator would like to be able to labour exactly as the grandfather did to feed the fire on the hearth, but he is forced to use a chainsaw: "although I abhor its functioning, its fumes reeking like a city street, its vomit of chips against my leg, its fascist speed and practicality, yet it lets me work alone" (p. 77). At first he used the chainsaw because he was alone and a crosscut needs a community of two people. His son was too young and all the neighbours had oil furnaces and didn't need wood. Now he continues to use it because he is still alone. The situation was different for the grandfather; he always could get someone to work on the other end of the crosscut saw. However, even the grandfather, either because of age or maybe because of the changing time, no longer used the saw at the end of his life: "he had electricity and a space heater, and the pipe-legged fuel tank had replaced the wood" (p. 78). It is evident that even during the grandfather's life technology was not static and that he was not obsessed by nostalgia for past technologies. But for the narrator the crosscut saw has come to symbolize everything of value that he has lost.

Now he is left alone with only fantasies of what might have been and his obsession with cutting wood. He has enough wood for two winters stacked, and yet he keeps on cutting more. For him "a man's work" implies using as little modern technology as possible. To bring in the wood he wears snowshoes and uses a toboggan, never horses or tractor. His obsession keeps him from facing reality. Whereas he would never have asked his grandfather the reason for their work together, his young son once asked him, "Daddy, why are we doing this?" (p. 81). To the boy, cutting wood seemed to be a senseless activity probably because there seemed to be no need for it and because no one else did it. If the father could have honestly admitted his reason for cutting wood, it might have been, "So I don't have to admit that things have changed since I was a boy and that I should make adjustments in my life to make room for such change."

Once when he mourned the death of the elm trees in the area and said, "Our grandchildren might never see an elm," Vera replied, "I have never expected to pass on the world intact" (p. 82). Vera's attitude could be called the realistic one perhaps, but it is one that could be dangerous; present generations can enjoy and consume the world's resources and then say that the people coming after can have what is left. On the other hand, her view admits the inevitability of change and his doesn't. As the narrator recalls all these memories while he cuts more wood, he seems to be struck by the first pains of heart attack, pains like a fish-hook in his body. But even this change in him does not dispel his fantasies. He sees a truck approaching on the road and prepares an answer in case the neighbour sees him and stops: "I shall smile and say 'No thanks.' I shall wave. 'Thanks all the same, I'm just waiting for my son. For Johnny. You see, he's coming up to help me with this wood'" (p. 84). He will not accept change in any area of his life and, therefore, must continue living in fantasy or die.

Obviously the kind of pastoral life that the narrator of "Wood" has managed to establish for himself is not the answer to problems brought on by technology or by changes in technology. Judging by Drew's essay "Wilderness and limitation", if there is any answer, it is more like Paul's and Liv's choice of withdrawal except that theirs probably occurs too late in the ecological crisis. In his essay Drew says that what we need is the "emergence of a new Biology"--a revolution of attitude rather than a revolution of a political nature (p. 16). First of all, man must recognize that he is an animal:

> We are one animal among many. We are not the centre, not the measure. Our power, that unlimited power to inflict death, distinguishes us like a gross disease. In urging us

> to reject it, ecologists rebel as much against the diminishment of man as against the debasement of the world in which he finds himself. (p. 16)

Drew suggests that man is not infinitely adaptable and that protection of nature is in his own best self-interest:

> There exists a point beyond which surrogates for the natural environment, no matter how cunningly designed, will prove inadequate. On these grounds alone the proper defence of man involves protection of nature in all its abundance and variety, for we have not yet begun to understand the psychic and emotional needs which it fulfils. (p. 16)

Continued growth is a danger, and "no ideology of technique will effectively oppose it" (p. 17). He recommends a life of contemplation and the re-emergence of "non-transcendent man, man lodged in nature" (perhaps like the North American Indian) to break "the hungry symbiosis between technology and the mainstream of Western philosophy and religion" that results in the conquest of nature (p. 17). These ideas are appealing, but it is clear that without a revolution of attitude occurring on a very large scale none of the problems can be solved. With the withdrawal into contemplation of the few who see the danger and see what to do, the problems will only get worse.

Drew recommends as a first step toward genuine limitation the conscious, unilateral action by one country to end industrial growth. He recommends that that country be Canada, a country in which "wilderness . . . and not mere pastoralism, is close to the national psyche" (p. 18). Obviously, he defines "mere pastoralism" (that is, classical pastoralism) as the attempt to balance nature and technology and judges such an attempt as futile and misguided: better to opt for wilderness-nature (that is, romantic pastoralism). In nature's fight against history, he claims, "Nature will certainly triumph. Whether it will triumph over us or in us and through us remains to be seen" (p. 19). Of all the seven writers chosen, Drew is the one most vehemently on the side of nature and against technology, and he uses strong arguments in order to win us over, to persuade us to make the crucial choice. Because the arsenal of arguments is so massive and persuasive and because his outlook has so much to commend it, only the critical reader will be aware of the negative aspects, or even dangers, of his extreme romantic pastoralism. But because he chooses nineteenth-century mechanistic technology instead of twentieth-century electronic technology as the prime menace, he seems somewhat old-fashioned (even though often correct) in his criticism of our society and our values. As a result, rather than probing the really new technologies to whose social implications and dangers the reader may be blind, Drew tends to point out what is already obvious.

CHAPTER II

ROBERT KROETSCH

Robert Kroetsch, in contrast to Drew, has a vivid sense of the technological horizon. This is indicated by Jeremy Sadness's tape-recorder, which dominates Gone Indian. In his first four novels Kroetsch's characters provide a contrast between the "natural" man (man in an older environment and associated with outmoded technologies) and "technological" man (man who is preoccupied with new technologies). Kroetsch seems to be a romantic in that he favours the natural over the technological (although this favouritism may be merely an attempt to redress the imbalance that he sees existing between the two). He shows the conversion of an older environment into an art form in The Studhorse Man where Demeter, the man of technology, sets about writing--or inventing--the life story of Hazard, the natural man, who is identified with the passing of an old technology (the horse) and its related environment. A similar process occurs in Gone Indian where the academic narrator attempts to retell (or rearrange for his own satisfaction) the story of Jeremy, a man who tries, ironically by means of a tape-recorder, to relate the experiences that are changing him into a natural man.

2.1 Two characters in But We are Exiles show the division and conflict between the natural man and the man of technology. As befits romantic pastoralism, nature is presented as the avenue of escape from the problems of civilization and human relationships. However, sometimes the characters exhibit an ambivalent attitude toward civilization and nature, and through images of nature and technology Robert Kroetsch shows that even in the wilderness there is no escape from human nature.

Robert Kroetsch is a romantic pastoralist somewhat like Wayland Drew, but Kroetsch's scope of attention is particular rather than general and his mode of writing is often comic rather than propagandistic. Through particular characters and situations, which are often comic, Kroetsch reveals to his readers his conviction that modern technology is often the enemy of the natural man. The way he does this is quite simple: he divides human characteristics into two antithetical parts and has a separate character embody each part. As Johnnie Backstrom in The Words of my Roaring says, there are "always the old dualities," and what he remarks upon in passing makes up the skeleton of Kroetsch's novelistic concerns.[1] In his emphasis on opposites, on dualities, Kroetsch reminds us of Miskobenasa's statement in The Wabeno Feast regarding the typical white-man's practice of dividing into twos and then assuming a conflict between them that must be reconciled. In Kroetsch's novels the division is between the man of nature and the man of technology. The natural man trusts instinct and passion and lives a life of action: he is associated with outmoded technologies and past environments. Opposing him is the man who values reason and new technologies; this man is a "thinker" rather than a "doer" and can cause the destruction of the natural man. In general this pattern applies to all of Kroetsch's first four novels, but his third and fourth, The Studhorse Man and Gone Indian, are more concerned with the process by which an old environment is turned into pastoral art than are the first two.

In But We are Exiles Michael Hornyak is the natural man and Peter Guy the man of technology. Michael is already dead when the novel opens, and Peter is of the walking wounded in that he feels incomplete and is looking for something that will make him whole. The characteristics that Michael embodies are what Peter lacks. Peter Guy is a kind of Narcissus with Michael Hornyak as his reflected (in mirror or water) image; Peter is blond, Michael dark; Peter is the man of intellect who once studied law, Michael the man of action whose main concern is physical pleasure. As Peter looks for Michael's body in the Mackenzie River at the beginning of the novel, he is really looking for an understanding of himself, of the dark non-rational parts of his being that he has long denied. In his search Peter "looked down again at the water and this time saw his own face watching him . . . He studied the reflection as if not sure whom he might see."[2] This time he sees his own face; by the end of the novel his face and Michael's are interchangeable, and he takes Michael's place in the canoe-coffin. Peter has hated Michael and wanted him dead, and in a way Peter is responsible for Michael's death because he allowed Michael to use a lamp with an unprotected bulb while cleaning out the barge. Here is the first instance of the "thinker" killing the "doer." However, it takes Peter a long time to recognize that each man had been looking for the other as though each realized his lack of wholeness, and that what Michael represents lives on in himself after the accident.

The antagonism between the two men goes back to the time six years before when Michael picks up Peter who is hitch-hiking to a summer job in the Rockies where his girlfriend, Caroline "Kettle" Fraser, waits for him. The two men take nine days to drive drunkenly across the prairies. Peter "was first scared and concerned and reluctantly drunk, and then fascinated, not only by Michael Hornyak but by himself" (p. 10). The man of instinct and impulse comes up against the man of intellect and responsibility, and the second is never the same again. When Kettle sees Peter after his trip across the prairies, she says, "Who are you? . . . Is Mike the stranger or are you?" (p. 143). Peter seems to have changed, and yet to Kettle's way of thinking perhaps not enough. When Peter discovers that Michael has become Kettle's lover, he retreats. Without a word to anyone he escapes north, but he never escapes the memory of that traumatic night. When Peter opens the door of Kettle's room the night of his discovery,

> he looked into a hotel room, started to walk in and saw them, this woman and what he thought was his best if very new friend . . . he believed he did not want to believe what he saw, the eloquence of flesh and desire caught dispassionately in the glass mirror inside the door; and even if he tried not to believe he turned and fled and kept on fleeing north and again north. (p. 48)

Michael has the nerve to do what Peter only vaguely longs to do. Peter's first impulse is to kill Michael, but instead he runs away from that impulse (or he thinks he does) as he runs north. The urge to kill is simply repressed, never faced. That murderous impulse then surfaces when Peter meets Michael six years later--as does the sexual impulse when he meets Kettle again.

At the end of the novel Peter finds himself alone on the barge that carries Michael's corpse, and he replays the discovery scene one last time: opening Kettle's door he "looked in on a mirror and the image of two raging bodies, a tumble of dark hair. And he was caught. He fled and fled and was caught there, trapped, doomed in that long mahogany frame. He fled and went on searching and could not see himself" (p. 145). Wanting protection from the raging blizzard, Peter pounds on the barge door and imagines Michael's voice saying "stay out." But this time Peter walks in and confronts Michael. Previously Peter "could not see himself"; he could only see Michael Hornyak in his place with Kettle and could not see that the passion which resided in Hornyak and which Peter saw there was also in himself. In the act of toppling the corpse overboard and taking its place Peter shows that he recognizes his inner nature and admits his guilt in Michael's death. It is not clear whether he is rescued or dies out on the lake in the blizzard, but Peter has taken the one step possible in his search for psychic wholeness when he changes place with the corpse.[3]

It is ironic that Peter, a man identified with civilization and technology, thinks that he can escape the natural man (Hornyak and the natural aspects of human nature that he represents in Peter) by fleeing into nature. In making this assumption he makes the same mistake that MacKay made in The Wabeno Feast. Peter's attempt to escape, in addition, mirrors the flight of Gordon Fraser, Kettle's father, which took place years before. Fraser can't abide "the outside" any more than Peter can, and yet he has to drown his hatred of the North in drink. Actually he has a double view of the North:

> The outside was suffocating . . . But it represented all he wanted his daughter to have. . . . He wanted his daughter to remember nothing. . . . the wilderness she had been exiled from was a forbidden land, yet a world to which she dreamed of returning, for it had become freedom and excitement and utopia to her. (p. 33)

Kettle was born in the North, but Fraser exiles her from it and doesn't even permit her to come home for the holidays. He behaves as though the freedom he has found in the North is something that he will not allow her to have. Actually it's because Kettle is a reminder of her dead mother that Fraser doesn't want her around. She reminds him that he "killed her mother" by bringing her from Scotland to northern Canada (p. 46). He tells Peter, "Now I hate it. And I can't leave" (p. 44). And later, "A man is free here. . . . He is so free that nothing else in the world is ever as good again. Never. But it's a screwing jail, this place, I *can't* leave. . . . I'm a free man down here, because you and your bunch can't get at me" (p. 46). He doesn't want Kettle around to see that his freedom has turned into drunkenness. Obviously freedom is where you find it; and judging by Fraser's life, one could be just as free in a city as in the wilderness. Fraser is free, he claims, and yet he has to admit that he is not free to leave because he doesn't fit in anywhere else. He is an example of a man who has made the mistake of equating a life in nature with a life of freedom, an assumption that is frequently made in romantic pastoral literature.

Kettle, also a romantic, has made the same mistake. Perhaps she has a false sense of what the North means if she thinks that it is a place of "freedom and excitement and utopia," but her view of civilization is equally shallow, although it does combine the pastoral and the technological. She seems disappointed with her trip north and vows she will never come back:

> I'll never come back. I'll find a sensible man. You two [Michael and Peter] have been crazy. And I'll have kids and take them for rides in the country and take them to movies. When I'm awake that's all I think about. Taking the kids into the country and to see movies. And I'll teach them to grow up like civilized people. (p. 111)

The last remark stems from a piece of her father's advice "about being civilized or making a mess--" (p. 111). Fraser thinks he has made a mess of his life and wants to make sure his daughter is civilized. Kettle thinks that her marriage to Michael "was all cockeyed somehow" and that she has messed up her life; so she is determined to create some civilized children (p. 111). Peter points out to her, "I went for drives in the country. I went to the movies," and he is one person whom she considers to be uncivilized (p. 111). Obviously, going to movies and driving in the country do not make people civilized. Later Kettle repeats her vow, "I'm leaving. I'm starting over brand new. My house is brand new. The trees are brand new. My fence is brand new. Even the lawn--" (p. 123). His experiences have matured Peter, and he realizes that he would spoil her "brand new" world: "I'd track in the old world . . . I'd mess it up. . . . There you'd be, raising your kids to be civilized, and in I'd come" (p. 124).

Peter doesn't belong in this world, but really is it worth belonging to? Even though he has separated himself from his past life by throwing the box of family photos and worthless shares into the river, his memory of his childhood home is a more appealing, although nostalgic, picture of civilization:

> . . . an old brick house in Ontario and china in the windows. A story for every cup. A fence out back; a stone fence older than the house; as old as a farm that was older than the town. Apple trees and oak trees gone crooked with age. The stories his mother told, of apple trees and fences; of the springtime of the dead. (p. 137)

This picture shows the beginning of the end, of something dead or dying but something that had at least lived. Kettle wants everything "brand new" (on the trip across the prairies Peter discovers that all Michael's "traditions" are instant and brand new also), without history and, therefore, without civilization. Perhaps she does vaguely realize that her vision is distorted when she begs Peter to "break the mirror" for her, but smashing everything and starting again won't help civilization, which she seems to care about maintaining (p. 124).

Perhaps because Michael is dead and already passing into Peter's private mythology, and because Kettle is not a convincing literary creation, these "natural" people are not as interesting as Peter, the man who values technology. Peter wants order, but he wants freedom from human relationships, so he has spent six years on the Mackenzie River. Unlike Michael who threw out all his maps on the prairie trip, Peter's job as pilot involves mapping the chaos of the river and following those maps carefully. Although Peter has attempted to escape from civilization into the wilderness, whether he knows it or not he has not completely abandoned civilization. Like a Conradian hero he clings to technique, which is a mark of civilization. He is described as "a white river bum with a river in his head to keep everything else out" (p. 103). This is an accurate but negative view. More positively one can see that "at least on the river he had the dignity of his skill," and he has his maps (p. 103). Off the river he might have much less.

In the wilderness and on the river Peter has been free from human entanglements:

> he was glad the skipper had insisted they depart [from Norman Wells], for they were running again. Leaving that tiny blotch of civilization and the shore people and Kettle Fraser behind.
>
> Running was the essence. . . . He alone knew where to go; his eyes, his hands, were pitted against the deceptively bland surface of the water. . . . Eleven hundred miles of river in his head . . . A man at the wheel and a man in the engine-room. Joined by an indicator hand and the jingle of bells. They did not have to hear each other's voices. Here the pilot's eyes and hands were in isolated yet absolute command. Pure. He wanted to shout the word. This is mine. Storm, ice, wind, rock--those can challenge me. But here a man is defined free from the terrors of human relationships. A man's function is so clear that each is simply called chief, skipper, second, pilot. . . . No confusion about who is to do what and who did what. . . . and always out beyond the wheelhouse the thin band of shoreline and trees, separating water and sky. An order maintained as precariously as that maintained by the hands on the wheel. The chaos held in check. (pp. 18-19)

The image of nature mirrors human nature: chaos is held in check in both. Peter wants freedom "from the terrors of human relationships" and so escapes into the wilderness after his one traumatic experience with people.

Here on the river the men are not persons, only functions, and Peter finds the freedom he wants in such a place. On his own, he does not willingly contend with chaos, unlike Michael. Peter recalls their trip across the prairies: "Instead of a park they found a burnt-off country . . . And the sun blazing down . . . 'Chaos,' Mike said. 'We've got some chaos to contend with.'" (p. 135) Given the choice, Peter would rather contend with the chaos of nature than with the chaos of human relations.
The technology under his command makes it possible for him to contend with nature, but only once he is freed from being the pilot in control of the boat can Peter come to terms with himself.

Once Hornyak, the natural man, is killed by technology and has reentered his natural element, Peter must contend with the passion and darkness in himself: "The running had long been a running away--from land, from people, from the confusion . . . a running away from the settlements . . . From home. But must he now run away from the river too--" (pp. 19-20). This is the question Peter asks himself. What Hornyak stands for, however, was always there in the stream of Peter's life, whether in the city or in the wilderness, and he never saw it. Now he must stop running. Now with the body in the river "he realized he had something new and frightening to learn about the river" as he does about himself (p. 29). Nature reflects Peter's psychological state, and once Michael has died in the river, nature becomes more difficult to cope with. The ambiguity in human nature is also found in nature: "Illusion and reality were confounded in a softly shining landscape, the sky upset into its own reflection" (p. 30). The landscape becomes alien and uninviting:

> Man intruded only occasionally on this blur of landscape . . . The chaos had not yet been resolved into form; men could find no cause for stopping. They did not map the

> shifting channels; they did not count the sandbars that grew like mushrooms in the night. (p. 31)

Once Peter meets Kettle again and is again attracted to her, he feels imprisoned by the landscape:

> It was he who had burst back to life. And the birth was a throbbing awareness of his isolation. The sea and the landscape fading off into a grey mist of frozen rain made a giant cage in which he could not grasp the bars to shake them. He was alone. (p. 57)

The physical world of fog is equivalent to Peter's mental and moral state: "They were afloat in a pool of water that was somehow suspended in a world of fog" (p. 67). He remembers a time when he saw nature differently:

> Ahead of the boat a loon dived, surfaced, dived again when the boat approached, and he remembered trying to guess where the quick black head would surface next; he guessed wrong each time and thrilled to this new unknown within an unknown. (p. 123)

The loon is an unknown within the larger unknown wilderness, and here Peter relishes the mystery and unpredictability, the chaos perhaps, of nature. For a moment the man of technology becomes a natural man.

In this novel the man of nature is associated with technology to a limited degree. Hornyak drives his large car across the prairies like a maniac in search of water: here technology is coupled with vitality and zest for life. He is the new owner of the boat that Peter pilots: here technology is associated with greed and the drive to power. And it is ironic that the natural man in this case sides with modern technology. The riverboat is a passing technology being superseded by the airplane and by the new boats with more efficient barges. The Nahanni Jane has, in fact, been serving as a conveyor of aviation gasoline along the Mackenzie River, and now after years of service she is too old and too small to compete profitably. "The new boats that were running them off the river had radar and depth-sounders," but never worked the river as late in the season as the Nahanni Jane (p. 17). The new boats with sophisticated new equipment probably don't have to work as late because they had already transported sufficient goods to make a substantial profit for their owners, and the additional trips into September would be regarded by those owners as more dangerous than they were worth. Hornyak seems to value old technology only to the extent of having a clipper ship the subject of his tattoo (p. 6). This "young baron of the trade that supplied frozen fish to Chicago and New York" has decided that after this last trip the riverboat will be turned into a fish-packer. As a vessel used for hauling goods she doesn't make enough money for him (p. 3). This decision is an insult to the crew who regard a docked fish-packer as a lesser breed of vessel; and as the men search for Michael's body, it is clear that they "were pleased as well as horrified" at the death of this capitalist baron whose life of pleasure depended on the hard work and hardships of this crew of poor half-breeds and transient whites (p. 4). Nevertheless, it would take more than the death of one man to stop the replacement of the old technology by the new; life and work on the riverboats are passing phenomena. However, in But We are Exiles the process by which the older environment and technology become redundant is not Kroetsch's prime concern as it is in some of his later novels.

2.2 The radio is the main technological innovation in The Words of my Roaring, but Kroetsch's use of it makes it clear that to rely on technology for answers to questions about human nature and human identity is a mistake. Neither will the garden, the typical landscape of the classical pastoral, provide more than a brief respite in the quest for answers.

Although it does recur in his third and fourth novels, the idea of an older technology being supplanted by a new one is not found in Kroetsch's second novel, The Words of my Roaring. In this novel the radio, which is now considered to be a past technology and thus often the focus of nostalgia, is the main technological innovation; and Doc Murdoch's garden serves as the timeless but artificial image of nature, an important image in Kroetsch's examination of the pastoral impulse. "The old dualities" are not as evident in this novel as in the other three. Johnnie Backstrom is the most realistic of all Kroetsch's protagonists and in him Kroetsch attempts to combine "the old dualities." However, even in this case Johnnie has a minor counterpart in the figure of Jonah Bledd. In this novel it is Johnnie, the natural man, the man of action, who causes, although indirectly, the death of another. Jonah's broken arm is the result of Johnnie's drunken driving. The broken arm makes it impossible for Jonah to get a job, and he drowns himself in despair.

Jonah is not the only person in despair, however. The novel is set in the depression of the 1930's, a time when conditions were so bad that "the gophers had to kneel down to get a bite to eat" and people were forced to hook horses onto cars because there was no money for gas or license plates (p. 76). In the midst of this despair, however, there is hope in the form of a voice on the radio. Because Johnnie's supporters can't afford radios and/or batteries, they meet in his funeral parlor to listen to Applecart's radio program. Applecart preaches every Sunday on the radio, and for many it is the "biggest event of the week" (p. 33). The power of his rhetoric via the medium of radio is so great that some of the listeners even cry with emotion. Applecart is very effective on radio in his mixing of politics and fundamentalist evangelical religion: "He was the voice of the prairies speaking" out against Toronto, "the Who-er that sitteth upon many waters" (p. 37, p. 36). The trouble with a radio, however, is that the speaker speaks but cannot listen; the communication is all one way. Johnnie talks to Applecart as Applecart speaks on the radio; he wants advice and gets only platitudes. "Applecart wasn't listening. He was a voice blasting away into the darkness. He didn't seem to have ears. He was one big blabbering mouth" (p. 94). That's radio: a voice in the darkness. But Johnnie expects more from that medium than it can give:

> I shouted at the tiny pinpoint of light; the solitary red pinpoint out of which boomed a voice that filled the funeral parlor. (p. 95)
>
> . . . there the radio was standing, a console model, where I usually put the coffin, and the voice was coming out full blast. . . . "Explain! Explain'" I shouted.
> Follow me, is all the voice would say. That hollow voice. (p. 96)

Out of the console model, Johnnie expects an answer to his questions, some consolation, advice. He gets nothing, loses his temper, and smashes the radio with one blow. "The voice went off. That little pinpoint of light went out. That pin prick" (p. 96). There is no enlightenment for Johnnie in that pinpoint of light. Obviously the novelist intends that Johnnie not rely on technology for his answers: he is to find them within himself.

Johnnie Backstrom is a natural man in a dry land. What has attracted him to seek the job of MLA is the "green" of the money that goes with it; getting elected would put an end to his financial drought. Inadvertently he promises rain to end the prairie drought if he is elected. Like an Indian medicine man, he promises that the prairie will "look like one big garden" after the rain (p. 20). The prairie is flat and dry. Trees "don't grow here by nature but have to be planted and tended," but even a windbreak can't completely stop the wind (p. 54). In the West "Nature can be so damned unnatural"--that is, not pastoral in the classical sense (p. 59) But perhaps Ontario, although "natural," with its blur of green and blue, is the unreal place. The green of money is not the only green that Johnnie has searched for in his life. When he didn't get a job with the railway after he finished high-school, he took the train east to find work harvesting the crops there. Even though he went east to learn to be an undertaker (ironically, he had wanted to be a doctor and save people but instead becomes an undertaker whose life depends on people dying), he ended up working on a lake steamer for ten years instead. After living on the often parched prairies "he couldn't stay away from all that water" (p. 25). To him Ontario looked like a garden with its "steaming rich hay fields" (p. 24). He "didn't know the world could be so green" (p. 57). When Helen Murdoch went east to university, she was similarly impressed:

> . . . those huge trees. Instead of little poplars and willows and balm of Gilead. Those rivers and streams all over the place, and grass up to the cows' bellies. Corn that was taller than I was. And fruit on trees instead of in boxes. And the big lakes. (p. 57)

Ontario, "the green lush old Eden," is what heaven must be like:

> The smell of clover rich and sweet, scenting the whole air. The grass falling heavy and green when the sickle hit it. Water--so much water in the air and grass and ponds and brooks, it blurred the whole world a blue-green. (p. 58)

Ontario is a land of abundance, too, with its sausage, cheese, and cream production. Paradoxically, however, Johnnie went to this place to learn undertaking, to learn to cope with death in paradise, but kept avoiding that confrontation with death until he came home to the West.

Even at home, however, this natural man tries to keep failure and mortality at bay--mainly by making love to Helen Murdoch in her father's garden. The first time we see Helen, she is "the girl who poured water" at a political meeting, a totally positive image in times of drought (p. 47). She drives "a swanky new Chevrolet," a symbol of success to those who drive Bennett buggies (p. 47). Helping Doc campaign, she hands out "little green pamphlets" to the people in the relief line (p. 48). Her car is green, too, with blue-green seats and chrome decoration, and is compared to a boat. It is rather out of place in the midst of drought-ridden poverty but provides the stuff of daydreams for the poor. Helen is obviously named after the most beautiful woman in ancient Greece for whom the Trojan War was fought and so many people destroyed. Along with beauty goes power for destruction, in this case perhaps the destruction of Johnnie's marriage to Elaine. Johnnie sees only the beauty, however. He thinks Doc should protect his desirable daughter with cannon, howitzer, moat, and wall, but on the other hand, sees an orchard as the fitting place for such beauty (p. 155, p. 57). Helen in her father's garden is Johnnie's vision of paradise on the prairies.

With the help of technology, Doc Murdoch has been able to create a beautiful garden, but it is a work of artifice (as are the typical gardens or island retreats of classical pastoral) and not really "natural." Johnnie's efforts at gardening when he was younger came to little because of frost and cutworms; only squash survived and no one wanted them. Doc, on the other hand, imported his plants and wrapped his trees and shrubs to protect them against -40 degree weather. Most survived because of his care, but this loving care can be seen as selfish -- Doc waters his garden while the drought is killing the crops and gardens of his neighbours. In it he has roses, cherries, plums, apricots, crabapples, cactus, and a goldfish pool. However, it is enclosed by a high hedge so that only those within can enjoy the beauty of the garden. Johnnie is an outsider who manages to get within the enclosure to be with Helen. In the midst of his campaigning he manages to spend seven nights with her:

> I have never been so happy. . . . I had a suspicion then that the Hanging Gardens of Babylon must have looked a lot like Murdoch's back yard. . . . in that garden I felt I was in another world. (p. 156)

> The smell of that garden at night; it wasn't a prairie smell, dry and stringent, parching the insides of your nose. It was an Eastern smell; it was lush, a green smell, heavy enough to be seen. . . . He's managed to create it right here in his own back yard--a little bit of the East. . . . It beats a potato patch . . . with bugs stripping the leaves. (p. 158)

Johnnie thinks that an orchard or garden (that is, cultivated nature) is the most suitable setting for the beautiful Helen, but once he describes her in more primitive, "uncultivated" terms:

> Little H. P. She was the garden, the forest of my soul; a forest tangled and scented. A forest wild. She was the turf and torment of my raucous love. My own wife, that bundle of consistencies, is all straight hair at one end, a twist or two at the other. H. P. was the paradox of my dreams. (p. 208)

Perhaps instead of meeting in a cultivated garden they should have met in wild nature which would mirror their passionate love more exactly. Here he seems to recognize the duality inherent in Helen's second name. In Greek legendPersephone, the consort of Hades, spent half the year as queen of the dead and half as goddess of vegetation and growth. There cannot be birth and growth without death, and Johnnie has not wanted to see this truth about nature and life; he has equated nature only with beginnings, not with ends.

Although Johnnie is a man of passion and nature, he is also a man of thought and conscience. Helen Persephone's garden is a place of mystery to him, and also a place of escape from ordinary day-to-day life and responsibility. He recognizes the garden as "another world" where he comes to make love to Helen (love-making is an expected activity in pastoral literature), where he wants time to stop; and when he is away from her, he can see that she and the garden are not the real world; "I looked at those poor people, starving and hoping, their crops burning up, and I thought of Helen in her father's garden: marigolds and nasturtiums. Zinnias and phlox" (p. 163). The real world is the one outside, and that is where he belongs:

> The green was almost gone from the countryside. The poplar groves looked dry and withered . . . The birds themselves . . . had given up hope. They were silent. . . . hope was faltering. The willows in the ditches were dying too early . . . The stinkweed was shrivelled and small . . . even the thistles . . . looked stunted. . . . The wheat fields themselves seemed to be praying for water. (p. 181)

The conflict between the pleasures of the garden world and the duties of the world outside can be seen most clearly when a bird in the garden sings in answer to the telephone ringing in the house (p. 166). Helen doesn't answer the phone, and Helen and Johnnie (complete with asphodel blossom--Persephone's flower associated with the dead--in his hair) splash in the pool instead. However, Johnnie can't ignore the call of duty for long. Death enters even into the garden, and the dead baby (the reason for the phone call) must be picked up and prepared for burial. Although he hasn't wanted to see it, death is present at the moment of birth, the end is implied in the beginning.

Technology may intrude into a pastoral dream world, but in this novel there is no condemnation of that fact. Johnnie's desire for a pastoral retreat is recognized as a part of human nature, and in spite of the incident where he destroys his radio, he is not presented as a hater of technology. At a farm auction sale, for instance, Johnnie gets carried away and buys a car that supposedly runs on water (p. 85). This man seems to be the type of person who wants the advantages that new technologies offer, while at the same time sees in himself the desire to get away from the world of duty, worry, and technology, and escape to one of sensual pleasure. Here in one character Kroetsch combines the man of technology and the man of nature.

2.3 Kroetsch's third novel, The Studhorse Man, laments the passing of an old technology (the horse) and an old way of life, the life and work of the studhorse man on the prairies. The conflict between the natural man and the technological man is again an important theme, and the reactions of the two main characters to new technologies reveal their values and their states of mind.

Unlike The Words of my Roaring, The Studhorse Man is a novel that laments the passing of a way of life, the passing, as well, of the natural man who is superseded by the man who loves new technology. Hazard Lepage, the hero, is a studhorse man who has fallen on hard times. He came west in the 1920's to work on a threshing crew and stayed on to be a studhorse man and raise his own line of horses. At first he did very well:

> He had of his own in the valley along the lake a herd of forty horses, as well as a waiting list of farmers' mares. He travelled two purebred stallions in addition to his own excellent breed: a Clydesdale and a quarter horse. By 1928 he was planning to build barns around the isolated mansion in which he lived. One year later he could hardly afford the feed to see his herd through the terrible winter of '29.[4]

1929 was terrible not only because of the weather; it was the beginning of the Depression, and the economic situation and the gradual mechanization of energy and transportation meant the decline of horsebreeding. Now years later at the time of the novel's action the need for studhorses on Alberta farms is gone: "Who ever thought . . . that screwing would go out of style? But it did, it is," Hazard mourns (p. 11). In years past dozens of mares were serviced by Hazard's stallions, but now he is penniless, lives on porridge, and plans to collect and sell bones in order to buy a mare so that the Lepage line of horses will not die out.

> Hazard . . . was desperate. In an area centred on a string of seven towns he was the only remaining studhorse man, yet in the previous season he had travelled the hundreds of miles of dirt roads . . . leading his beautiful blue beast of a virgin stallion--and he had found not one farmer with a mare that wanted covering. (pp. 7-8)

Hazard's most desperate circumstances occur during the years of World War II, a time that marked the change on farms from horses to tractors and other machinery and that ushered in the population shift from the country to the city where there was work. These years were a time of great change for more people than Hazard Lepage. The question of the extinction or survival of Hazard's line of horses provides the plot of the book, but the question can also be applied to the state of rural life in Canada.

Because of mechanization Hazard's life as a studhorse man, a life in nature, is even more reckless and unpredictable than ever before. Tad Proudfoot, who came west as a blacksmith and had an interest in living horses, now is a bone buyer and has an interest only in dead horses; he informs Hazard that horses are obsolete. Once the war is over, a car will be something that everyone will have, and on the farm "once gas rationing is over and tractors are back on the market, you won't be able to give a horse away," Tad says (p. 14). And, indeed, now that the war is almost over, in one day in the Edmonton slaughterhouse corrals there are a thousand horses that will be killed for pet food. In a world of new technology Hazard is an anachronism; people think he is crazy and regard him as a "maniac who peddles horse cock from farm to farm when nobody wants horses"(p. 16). If one is not in tune with the times, one can easily seem to be crazy.

However, Demeter Proudfoot, the narrator of the novel, is much more in tune with the times he lives in, but he, indeed, is actually crazy. While Hazard is associated with nature, Demeter finds his identity in technology--not that he is particularly interested in machines, but he is obsessed with facts, technique, order, and history.[5] As Wayland Drew has pointed out in his novel, an obsession with such things is characteristic of the western technological mind. Demeter is the possessor of such a mind; he is obsessed with the past, with turning the present into history, with "the making of his [Hazard's] present into history" (p. 11). Demeter is upset by Hazard: "he injured me deeply. He denied the past". (p. 11). "Hazard's peculiar little aversion to the past" is certainly not shared by Demeter (p. 31). Demeter thinks of himself as a historian, a seeker after truth, and he is not satisfied with the bits of information Hazard gives him regarding his escapades: "We who assemble fragments long for a whole image of the vanished past" (p. 33).

It could be that Hazard will not admit that times are changing and that there is no place for him in the new horseless world, but more likely he is so busy living in the present moment and with an eye to the future (that is, the future of Poseidon's line, and possibly of his own if he can marry Martha) that he has little time for remembrances of things past: that he leaves to Demeter who seems incapable of action. Rather than choosing the futility of seeking for the "whole image of the vanished past," Hazard, as his name indicates, seems content enough with the fragmented present, which is what one expects of a natural man. However, Demeter finds in his investigations of Hazard's past that "all indications are that the Lepages of Rimouski were great dreamers about the future: cette mauvaise habitude qui sépare les Françaises des Anglais" (p. 117). Dreaming of the future can be utopian, and here Demeter is implicitly condemning such activity as an escape from the past and present; but surely he is wrong. Hazard dreams about the future only in terms of the past and present. The world of horses that he knows and is comfortable with is the world that he wants to survive with a little help from him. It is the old technology (the horse) that he works to perpetuate into the future, and thus in his own way he links the past, present, and future.

Demeter, on the other hand, could very well suffer l'habitude des Anglais--that is, dreaming about the past as the repository for all that is worthwhile. He values the past because it is something ended and orderly. As editor, biographer, and interpreter of Hazard's life, Demeter probably distorts Hazard in his search for the "whole image" and the "truth"; however, it is difficult to know to what extent such distortion occurs because we get the whole story filtered through Demeter's crazy mind. Demeter seems to be scientific and businesslike in researching Hazard's past, and his measuring, filing mentality is contrasted to Hazard's free-wheeling, non-categorizing mind. The fact that Demeter reduces all his information on Hazard to fit 3 x 5 file cards makes one suspicious that he is making order of Hazard's life where there was no order at all (p. 39). The making of order is what distinguishes art from life, and Demeter prefers art to life. It is even possible that, instead of turning the fragments of Hazard's life into a coherent historical or biographical account, Demeter weaves those fragments into fiction--in this case pastoral fiction that is, by definition, backward looking. If this is so, Demeter becomes a paradigm of the artist who takes whatever "facts" are on hand and turns them into art; thus, Demeter would be as much Hazard's creator as his destroyer.

Besides the order of art, technology is also a protection against chaos for Demeter: "I sit contented in my clean white tub, the radio turned low, square and protective on the windowsill, glossy against the dark night beyond" (p. 18). Sports, too, makes order out of chaos (and in sports as in sex Demeter prefers to be the spectator rather than a participant). Demeter enjoys recalling the hockey players of his youth; the world of hockey (and the world of childhood in retrospect) is simple and ordered, but real life is messy and complicated, and Demeter wants nothing to do with it and retreats into madness, an escape from past, present,and future. He is the opposite of the natural man, and that, Kroetsch seems to suggest, is the reason for his madness.

Demeter, who loves order and confined spaces (such as his bathtub), is a direct contrast to Hazard, who "abhorred cramped spaces" (p. 74). For Demeter "the confrontation with mere space can be so appalling" that he withdraws from all such confrontations (p. 61). Demeter cannot understand why, once Hazard is in Edmonton, a city that offers "a bright embrace" and "arms of sane comfort," he is willing to leave it for the dark, silent, rugged land (p. 59). While Demeter searches out mental mazes for himself and chooses confined spaces, Hazard does everything he can to free himself from all things that confine. The boxcar which conveys him to Edmonton is like an immense coffin full of bones, but he is not yet ready to be buried and so escapes it. When Poseidon is released from the boxcar, Hazard endures a nightmare search for the horse through a maze of boxcars with steam issuing from the locomotive to make the search even more weird and frustrating (p. 25). The basement of the old people's home where Hazard plays cards to earn his keep is also a maze and a trap that Hazard must escape in order to ensure life for himself and his horse. Hazard is the man of action, and the one time that Demeter decides to take action the result is the death of Hazard; perhaps for the man of thought to usurp the role of the man of action inevitably leads to death and destruction.[6]

Because of his dependence on his radio to blot out the nothingness or chaos of space (physical and probably mental, too) and because of his lack of desire for freedom and love of confinement, one might suspect that Demeter would heartily approve of other technologies. Hazard, on the other hand, would be expected to hate all new technologies that supersede the horse and interfere with the freedom of the natural and unconfined life. The events at the Eshpeter ranch are probably the most important in trying to sort out Demeter's and Hazard's responses to technology. While Hazard enjoyably recuperates from buckshot wounds at her ranch, Marie Eshpeter is having Poseidon's semen collected for use in artificial insemination. All the supernatural events Demeter experiences at the supposedly haunted Eshpeter ranch are nothing compared to artificial insemination which is the real "super-natural" event. But the question is whether to regard "super-natural" as being against nature or being above nature. It is not clear whether Hazard is horrified or merely surprised when he sees what Marie is doing to Poseidon.[7] Demeter's interpretation is that Hazard is horrified at the unnatural act and runs to a priest to get advice. But it may be that old, blind Mrs. Eshpeter can see better than Demeter; she says that Hazard "was a man of utter genius. He saw in a flash that his one horse could service not a dozen mares a week but a hundred in one day" (p. 135). It might take an utter genius to see the possibilities of artificial insemination; but because of Hazard's untimely death, it is left to Eugene Utter, the opportunist, to reap the benefits of Hazard's vision. After all, Hazard's great fear was that Poseidon would have no offspring. Now with the help of the "super-natural," Hazard's fear becomes groundless.

Even if Hazard's vision of the multiplication of Poseidon's offspring includes artificial insemination, it is not likely, if he remains true to the values of the stereotypical natural man, that his vision of technology in aid of fertility goes any further than that. Demeter, however, as a man who loves new technologies, claims to have had the foresight to see that the fertility of the horse can be used in a new way; he says, "Surely those PMU farms that dot the plains of Alberta are memorial enough to my foresight and courage" (p. 166). He maintains that horses were almost extinct in Alberta until he set free Martha's five mares and brought them to Poseidon and that now it is Poseidon's offspring that are being used for the production of PMU (from Pregnant Mare's Urine is extracted the female hormone, oestrogen, which is used in birth control pills). There is now much demand for stud service because the mares in the PMU barns must be constantly pregnant. Thus, in a way, Hazard succeeds in his plans for Poseidon, but the success is ironic because the horse's fertility is used against fertility in human beings.

Another irony is that Demeter (named for the Greek goddess in charge of plant growth but true to his role in the novel) takes his stand finally on the side of anti-fertility. He is very pleased with the new use of the horse's fertility; and because of PMU Demeter thinks Poseidon is happy, farmers are happy, and people in general are happy:

> Thus you see that for a modest profit to the enterprising farmer, mankind has been delivered from itself. . . . thanks to me, dear Poseidon was shortly after his master's demise to become the busiest creature in all of Alberta. (p. 166)
>
> Scurrilous, barbarous, stinking man would soon be able, in the sterility of his own lust, to screw himself into oblivion, to erase himself like a rotting pestilence from the face of God's creation. (p. 167)

It seems here that Demeter in his madness hates mankind and is pleased to think that man's technology is being put to use against mankind itself. Within the scope of the novel there is little evidence that people have been nasty to Demeter, but in his madness (and he has been institutionalized for about fifteen years by the time this story of Hazard is told) logic is too much to expect. It is clear that Demeter thinks that mankind is no better than vermin and should be congratulated if it exterminates itself, ironically, through the very act that formerly multiplied the human race on earth. As an ironic metaphor copulation as "erasure" is effective, but Demeter doesn't know that in actuality it is not working to the end that he desires: all the PMU barns in Alberta have not reduced the population explosion. Still, his hatred of the irrational, of chaos and disorder, of the fragmented present, spills over into hatred of people, those messy irrational creatures, for whom erasure (by whatever technological means available) is the deserved end.

2.4 *Gone Indian has as its main character a man, Jeremy Sadness, who must free himself from dependence on technology and become a natural man. Ironically, he does this by recording on a tape recorder all his thoughts about the experience of changing from an urban academic to an Indian. Madham, the civilized, over-rational academic, is the technological man and is the enemy of the natural man. However, it is he who is entrusted with the tape recordings, and his manipulation of them possibly converts Jeremy's experiences into pastoral art.*

In Kroetsch's fourth novel, Gone Indian, "the old dualities" are represented in the persons of Mark Madham, the professor of English, and Jeremy Sadness, his student. As his name indicates, Madham is a madman, and, following the pattern established by Kroetsch, he is on the side of new technology. Jeremy is a romantic and, in the manner of Peter Guy, chooses an escape into the wilderness away from technology. Unlike Peter, however, Jeremy is the natural man (or one who is trying to become natural) in this novel in search of a lost Eden.[8] The motif of a lost Eden is important in some pastoral literature and is common, Kroetsch thinks, in North American literature:

> . . . the sense of a new possibility when you went out there, to the wilderness and the frontier. I think that in Canadian literature there's more a sense of irony about that Eden--

> maybe because the sense of the old world is a little stronger in the Canadian pioneer. That sense of irony is sometimes fatal, but it's always present.[9]

That sense of irony is not present in But We are Exiles but is in Gone Indian--and perhaps is the reason why the latter is a more interesting novel. Kroetsch takes a young American and puts him on the last North American frontier, one that he has spent his adolescence longing for and, in fact, creating--a situation that begs for ironic treatment.[10]

At first Jeremy appears to be anything but a natural man. He is a graduate student who cannot write more than the first sentence of his dissertation, a sentence about Columbus and new beginnings, and whose sex life is a disaster. But transfer him to northern Alberta and he becomes a natural man; his sex life improves tremendously and his dissertation becomes completely unimportant to him. Ironically, it is Madham, the man of technology, who sends Jeremy to Edmonton for a job interview and thus puts in his way chances for his transformation into a natural man. Even while on his trip to the Northwest, however, Jeremy is not to waste his time; since he is unable to write things down on paper, Professor Madham suggests that he speak his thoughts regarding his dissertation into a tape recorder. This is not what Jeremy uses the machine for, however; instead, he speaks his thoughts on what happens to him in Edmonton and Notikeewin and mails the tapes to his professor who, claiming to take Jeremy's words "at face value," edits them for us (p. 2).

Jeremy's wife, Carol, however, thinks that everything on the tapes is a lie, that Jeremy is "faking everything" (p. 2). True, there are times when he doesn't have his tape recorder with him and must depend on his memory to recreate later his impressions of his experiences, and that memory could be faulty. In addition, it is impossible to know whether

Jeremy is mistaken in his impressions, is lying, or is telling the truth. Although spoken in his own voice, his words can be understood to be either lies or truth or a mixture of both. Words spoken directly or words on paper can certainly be "faked," and technology, no matter how sophisticated, doesn't eliminate the possibility of fakery or the element of the subjective receiver.

Because the tapes take several days to get from Jeremy to Madham, they enable Madham "to encounter, after the act, the thought that was father to the act" (p. 60). These tapes make Madham a kind of peeping Tom (appropriately his other name is Thomas), a peeping Tom with a difference since he peeps through time rather than space and uses the ear rather than the eye. Madham acts as editor of Jeremy's tapes and what we know about Jeremy is what Madham chooses to tell us; it is possible that he is wrong in his interpretation of events either because of lack of perception or because of malice. If either of these is the case, it would be easy to falsify facts by selecting certain details and omitting others. Another possibility is that Madham chooses from and arranges what is given to him by Jeremy to match his own idea of what a young man should experience and feel as he heads out for an already idealized (that is, by Jeremy) wilderness. Take a man like Jeremy and his dissatisfaction with his urban, academic life and place him in a wilderness that has been transformed by the (romantic pastoral) literature that he has read, and certain behaviour, thoughts, and feelings will be expected of him by one (Madham and, perhaps, the reader) who is certainly familiar with pastoral literature. Therefore, Madham could be casting Jeremy in the role of modern shepherd, although of the romantic rather than the classical type, and presuming in him a nostalgia for past technologies and an older environment. Madham, like

Demeter in The Studhorse Man, becomes the mad artist who creates pastoral art out of experiences that could be interpreted in a different way. Thus, the accusation of "fakery" could be levelled at him just as easily as at Jeremy.

Nevertheless, whatever view is taken, it is clear that it is Madham who regards the tape recorder as truly important and that to become a natural man Jeremy must get rid of the machine. Besides hindering the transformation to "naturalness," in this novel reliance on technology is sometimes presented as a kind of Faustian pride. On one occasion Roger Dorck mistook a cliff over a lake for a hummock and with his snowmobile "leaped up and over; like a dream of himself he climbed, into the night air, free of the earth at last" (p. 26). Later Jeremy refers to Dorck as having "kicked himself loose from gravity itself" (p. 73). When Jeremy rides a snowmobile for the first time, he feels as he imagines Dorck to have felt before he had his accident: "I was beginning to understand why Dorck went out to the edge of a cliff and took a crack at flying. The earth was too small. I wanted the sky as well" (p. 39). With the help of modern technology such as airplanes and snowmobiles Jeremy can be a present-day Icarus or Kurtz.

At first Jeremy is a man dependent on technology. When he arrives at his destination by plane, he finds that the suitcase he retrieves is not his. His immediate response is to jerk "loose the microphone of his portable tape recorder, as if he might be drawing some magical six-gun that must solve the problem" (p. 6). Jeremy wears his tape recorder on his thigh and draws the microphone like a gun on other occasions, too (p. 62). On the American frontier, at least in the movies, a six-gun was often used as the solution to a problem. Dependence on technology, although in this case electronic, exists on the new frontier; but although the technology is new, the way Jeremy uses it reveals his nostalgia for past technology.[11] On one occasion he "shoulder[s his] trusty tape recorder" like a rifle (p. 11). He also uses his tape recorder as instant confessional. Madham writes that "in the absence of the priest Jeremy resorted to his tape recorder and, in his fashion--if I might put it bluntly--used the microphone to masturbate" (p. 36). Here Madham seems to be equating a solitary outpouring of pointless words and emotion with masturbation; solitary sex and solitary confession are both mechanical and perverse, Madham suggests. However, Jeremy's self-expression does seem to depend on his tape recorder. He says, "Without it I'd be lost," and when it comes to saying anything in the absence of his tape recorder he is indeed lost: "Given the microphone, I could have made a speech. I turned away" (p. 64, p. 73). Although the lack of it doesn't seem to inhibit action, Jeremy finds that he is speechless without the microphone in his hand. When he is in trouble, he longs to speak into his tape recorder: "I reached for my microphone, desperate to whisper into its ass's ear" (p. 145). When he is judging the beauty contest, he feels the need of his tape recorder before he can speak: "I took the microphone out of her [Jill's] hand. A great calm washed over me" (p. 121). Clearly Jeremy is very dependent on this particular machine; and at the end, if one accepts Carol's interpretation of events, Jeremy hangs the tape recorder on the bridge because he is no longer dependent on it. He has finally become a man of nature.

It is Mark Madham who insists that Jeremy take a tape recorder into the wilderness, and it is Madham and the machine from which Jeremy must free himself by the end of the novel. Madham is a middle-aged English professor who has come from the Canadian prairies to live and work in

Binghamton. He is Jeremy's "double," and the conflict between them again shows Kroetsch's interest in the conflict between action and intellect, between the natural and the technological; Jeremy says to Madham, "You do nothing, I do everything: we arrive at the same predicament" (p. 56). Madham sets himself up as the rational man, although how rational he really is is hard to determine since he is the narrator and we have nothing against which to measure his opinions of himself. One thing is clear: he is like Demeter Proudfoot in that the freedom of open spaces is not for him. The New York that Jeremy finds ugly, violent, and confining, Madham finds beautiful. "I am a western boy who ever dreamed east," he says of himself (p. 95). Because he has lived his youth on the prairies, he thinks of himself as an expert on the wilderness; but because of his hatred of the prairies and his intense desire to escape from there, he is a one-sided expert at best. He says: "Jeremy, growing up in the east, felt compelled to play Indian; I can only assure you [Jill] I have been Indian enough. . . . I do recollect the sense of being . . . trapped in the blank indifference of space and timelessness" (p. 124). Madham is wrong in this judgement of himself. He has never "been Indian": a true Indian would never feel trapped by space and timelessness. Here he calls himself "a natural man," but all evidence in the novel leads one to conclude that he is not a man of nature at all (p. 124).[12]

Although Madham probably doesn't face up to it, he is everything that Jeremy despises and wants to escape from. Jeremy calls him a "civilized" man, a "transcendent" man, a "mind-fucker"--one who denies the body but uses it for the titillation of the mind (p. 49). He is just the right man for Carol Scull who (appropriate to her name) doesn't like a man who is "too physical" (p. 71). Although "buffalo" is a positive image everywhere else in the novel, Jeremy applies it negatively once to Madham: "Who are you, you pompous ass? Sitting there in your office . . . chewing your cud, the grass you cropped off the green fields twenty years ago, vomiting it up into your own mouth, chewing it again. And again" (p. 19). According to Jeremy, Madham is one of those "morticians of knowledge" of which the university is full (p. 88). Although it is Jeremy Sadness who is named after "the ultimate professor," Jeremy Bentham, it's probably Madham who resembles him more: "That hero of our reasonable world had ordered himself stuffed and embalmed: he had become his own icon, sitting in a chair in a fine display case. In University College [London]" (p. 51). The rational mind is Madham's icon, and Jeremy is out to overthrow it.

2.5 Jeremy believes that Grey Owl is the embodiment of the free and the natural and attempts to be like him. Ironically, however, both Grey Owl and Jeremy have gained their romantic impressions of the wilderness from literature. In this novel the buffalo serves as the image of the non-rational and vital (as the horse does in The Studhorse Man) and as an antidote to new technology and reason. Again the pleasure garden is introduced as a tempting alternative to the world of technology, but Jeremy must abandon both the garden and the tape recorder for either life or death in the wilderness: an appropriate end for a romantic.

When Jeremy arrives in the Northwest, he wants to discard his present identity and be someone else; he wants to be Grey Owl, the embodiment of his image of the natural man and of the "dream of himself." His professor, who expects him to finish his Ph.D. and get a job, and his wife, who wants a baby, a house, and a car, have no respect for his dream. The values of these two people mean nothing to Jeremy: he seeks "transformation." He is a romantic Huck Finn, enamoured of the idea of frontier, an idea that he got out of books. As a city boy he knows nothing about country or wilderness life but has chosen Grey Owl as the model for his life (and, of course, Grey Owl in turn got his idea of wilderness out of books). Madham interprets Jeremy to us:

> Jeremy believed that his whole life was shaped and governed by some deep American need to seek out the frontier. A child of Manhattan, born and bred, he dreamed always a far interior that he might in the flesh inhabit. He dreamed northwest. (pp. 5-6)

The Northwest of Canada is the last frontier in North America where man can test his strength against nature. This non-political motive may be the reason why Jeremy chooses to emulate an Englishman, Archie Belaney, who pretended to be an Indian and who lived like one, rather than to emulate Thoreau. Both were natural men, but Thoreau was political and Belaney was not. "Transformation" was not Thoreau's motive for his temporary withdrawal from society. Grey Owl, on the other hand, left England for the Canadian wilderness, about which he had read as a boy, and later emerged from it with an identity accepted as Indian. Jeremy "believed that his life's predicament found its type in Grey Owl" and so chooses to be transformed like him (p. 7). Jeremy's "predicament," as he sees it, is to escape from an over-technologized, over-rational, over-intellectualizing world (everything that Madham represents). He arrives in Edmonton outwardly transformed but inwardly with a long way to go. He is dressed like an Indian--buckskin jacket, braids, moccasins--or rather like what he thinks an Indian is. When he meets a real Indian at the Notikeewin Winter Festival, Daniel Beaver, the Indian, has a brush-cut, and one of Beaver's sons points to Jeremy and asks, "Why is his hair that way?" (p. 65). Jeremy's Indian outfit, probably modelled on Grey Owl's attire, seems outlandish to the Indians.

Jeremy recalls playing cowboys and Indians in New York when he was a child: there were "the bigger kids playing cowboy and me being the Indian. I didn't want to be the Indian at all" (p. 94). The suggestion here is that the bigger children were merely playing at being cowboys and never intended to be mistaken for them but that somehow Jeremy wasn't playing at being an Indian; he was one even then although it wasn't his choice. For him it seems more as if his identity were revealed to him by the other children and he rejected it at that time. His mother's friend, a tailor, introduced him to Grey Owl's books: "He gave me his dream of the European boy who became . . . pathfinder . . . borderman . . . the truest Indian of them all" (p. 94). Again identity is imposed on Jeremy by others; perhaps the tailor's dream was to be like Grey Owl, and when he knew he never would, he passed on the dream to Jeremy. Because of the tailor, many hours of Jeremy's youth were spent reading and dreaming about Grey Owl (p. 59). As he watches Beaver deliberately lose the dog-sled race, Jeremy uses the same phrase in his musing about Grey Owl: he was "the truest Indian of them all, that strayed Englishman--that corpse carried north . . . into the bush. Into the wilderness" (p. 80). But surely in some ways Grey Owl was a fake. For instance, he refused to hunt and kill at the end of a life of hunting and killing, and turned to conservation. The whole life of a "true Indian," however, is that of a conservationist who hunts and kills with reverence while recognizing that his life depends on the death of other living creatures.

There is a danger that Jeremy, too, will transform himself into a "fake" Indian and that, because of his romantic bookish expectations of the wilderness, he will not be able to recognize the true Indian and the true wilderness when he sees them. For instance, Daniel Beaver, even with a brush-cut, is at least as true an Indian as Grey Owl. When Jeremy asks Beaver why he threw the sled race, the Cree answers, "I saw I could win"--winning itself had then become unimportant" (p. 96). It is the "magnificent indifference" to winning of Beaver and his nine dogs that makes Jeremy decide to enter the snowshoe race (p. 81). He wants to show the Cree that winning is important, but for Jeremy the race turns out to be more a race to find his identity. He throws away his buckskin jacket to make racing easier and forgets to take his suitcase keys out of the pocket. He thinks that he will come back to retrieve the jacket but doesn't. Perhaps the race is the equivalent of a medicine dance. Mrs. Beaver's grandfather danced a medicine dance, "dancing . . . until the flesh . . . tore free," to gain a vision (p. 101). Perhaps a similar thing happens to Jeremy; his old self tears free and he must become a new person. When one man later asks him, "you part Indian or ain't you?", it comes to Jeremy that "when I might have explained, I saw instead the potential truth of the observation" (p. 91). He seems to be becoming Indian: "When I might have saved myself, simply by speaking. But I would not speak. For if I had tried, it would have been a tongue I did not understand" (p. 93). He thinks of himself as an Indian here and is treated the way many Indians are treated: he is beaten up by a gang of white men. Perhaps this is a better indication of Indian identity than is the wearing of beaded clothes and braids. Jeremy is rescued by Beaver who outfits him in his old jacket and an old pair of moccasins. (Jeremy's were stolen while he was unconscious.) These old clothes given to him by a real Indian complete his outward transformation. To Jeremy, Grey Owl is a man "who died into a new life," one who may have faked his death but "woke up free nevertheless" (p. 62). Like Grey Owl, Jeremy suffers a death and a resurrection as a new person; and his snowshoe race, the beating by the white men, and his dream of riding with the Indian warriors to triumph over the modern world make Jeremy's identification with what the Indians stand for complete.

In the back of a truck nestled among Beaver's sled dogs Jeremy departs even further from his past life as a person who valued technology and reason. Once Jeremy has come to identify himself as an Indian, he is ready to dream of the buffalo coming back to the prairies and of riding with the Indian warriors to destroy Edmonton. There was no room on the prairies for buffalo and Indians once the land was fenced with barbed wire into square fields where wheat could be grown and cattle raised. The new technology of wire fences imposed on the land wiped out an old way of life. Now in his dream Jeremy sees that "the barbed wire fences fell rusted into the greening earth, were gone. The squared fields were hardly a trace on the burgeoning grass . . . . The wheatfields were gone" (p. 102). Showing nostalgia for a life he never knew, Jeremy dreams of European civilization destroyed and the Indian way of life restored. The city must be destroyed because it eats up what is good and natural: "Fort Edmonton, become a city, was holding out against its own origins. Its greedy houses ate grass and trees" (p. 104). Once Edmonton is destroyed and burned, the grass will grow back and the buffalo will thrive once more: that is Jeremy's pastoral dream.

For his participation in the restoration of Indian civilization Jeremy's Indian friends rename him Has-Two-Chances. Perhaps in his dreams and maybe even through individual effort Jeremy can have two chances, but in the conflict between European and North American Indian civilization there is no second chance for either one. And even for Jeremy it is possible that the idea of a second chance (a new beginning in the manner of Columbus) is an illusion, even though it did more or less work for Archie Belaney. Nestled among the dogs Jeremy "found himself in a dark so dark he might have been in a womb. Dreaming the world to come" (p. 106). Through dreams he can project his nostalgia for the past into the future, thus combining the Golden Age with Utopia; but he does not want to, or perhaps cannot, cope with the present. Like the narrator of Surfacing, this dreamer considers the possibilities and dreams of the world beyond the dark womb preferable to the actualities one must face. And like that narrator, Jeremy becomes an animal rather than accept the actual.

In Jeremy's case, however, he becomes a buffalo only in his dream and while in that state finds and makes love to Buffalo Woman. And in a storm on his way to Bea after Roger revives, Jeremy imagines himself a buffalo: "I was stripped down to the animal endurance that enabled a buffalo to survive" (p. 144). His dream has carried over somewhat into his life, and Bea becomes his Buffalo Woman. It is evident that Jeremy regards being a buffalo as a great, natural, and positive thing. If the horse serves as the image of the past, of the non-rational, of fertility and vitality in The Studhorse Man, in Gone Indian the buffalo serves the same purpose. In Binghamton a few buffalo are kept in a paddock where only in the memory of the animals does buffalo grass exist; in northern Alberta herds of buffalo live in large fenced parks; only in Jeremy's dreams are they the spirit of the prairie and the essential food for a nomadic way of life. Perhaps Jeremy is indeed "the tragic figure of our unhappy days, embracing the shadow of his imagined self.[13] Dreaming his universe in his own little skull" (p. 108). Retreating into pastoral dreams or into a completely internal world is the ultimate escape, but for Jeremy it is temporary and he tries other, what he thinks are more permanent, routes of escape: sex and either life or death in the wilderness.

The "bleak and haunted landscape" of Alberta in winter is an appropriate scene for Jeremy's quest for identity (p. 13). The space of the prairies impresses him, but he feels that if he dozes, the space would enclose him and he might "be gone forever" (p. 15). Edmonton is on the far edge of North American civilization, and Bea Sunderman's farm, which is located further in the wilderness, is fittingly named "Worlds End". It is "a dark house in a dark wood" out on the prairies with no other farm houses near (p. 145). It is a place of temptation for Jeremy, temptation that he is glad to give in to. It is the home of an extensive clock collection but not one of them is ticking: time has stopped here. Amazingly, the house is a hot smothering jungle inside. In the same way that Doc Murdoch's garden provides a place of sexual temptation and a contrast to the drought-ridden prairies outside, Jeremy's Beatrice has her jungle-garden. It, too, is a place of escape. Madham's remarks on the occasion of Jeremy's sexual encounter with Jill, Bea's daughter, on the High Level bridge in Edmonton--"beyond your hot joining, the empty and dread air held nothing for you but nothing"--could not be applied to Jeremy's encounter with Bea (p. 59). She is a kind of earth goddess who "gave to the whole room the smell of earth: not of flowers only but the dark breathing silence of ferns in crevices of rock. . . . The smell of a northern forest" (p. 147). Like Helen Murdoch, Bea lives in a garden:

> The interior of the house was an imprisoned garden. House-plants of every ominous shade and shape crowded the windows, crept up and down the walls, hung in green tentacles from the ceilings. Begonias. Geraniums. Mistletoe cactus falling like chain from a brass pot. Philodendron reaching down from a basket. A spider plant complete with spiders. Potted palms. A rubber plant. A cut-leaf philodendron climbing a post. Ivy climbing up the railing of the stairs. The whole downstairs was a jungle. (pp. 31-32)

The air here is anything but "empty and dread," but still this house does appear to be a place of enchantment and imprisonment (like Doc Murdoch's garden or the Eshpeter ranch); it is an "imprisoned" garden, and somehow we associate gardens with beginnings rather than endings. "Worlds End" as the name of the garden sounds ominous and unsuitable. Of course, if Bea can stop time, she doesn't have to worry about beginnings and endings; she can remain young forever, and in the dark Jeremy can take the place of her long-vanished young husband, Robert. Perhaps when Jeremy bumps against some of the clocks and sets them ticking, this marks the start of a real (that is, within time) relationship between him and Bea.

However beautiful Bea's garden is, there is a feeling that such luxuriant vegetation on the prairies is somehow unnatural and ensnaring. Vegetation can be seen as a trap; it can prevent one from seeing "where he stood, where he was going" (p. 87). During the snowshoe race Jeremy meets men who look like muskrats in their parkas; they

> crept up from mysterious waters that I had not seen, had not ever seen, but those waters were full of lilies. Lilies frozen into the ice--and deep below the frozen surface the long stems of the lilies hung . . . ready to enwrap, ready to ensnare the plunging swimmer. (pp. 92-93)

Bea's jungle could also be such a place of ensnarement. The beauty Jeremy sees in the space and snow of the prairies as he snowshoes seems free of these negative implications:

> The snow was a garden. Flowers of light and shadow bloomed out of the banks of the frozen river . . . A broken crow's nest in a crooked poplar had sprouted petals of light. . . . A patch of fractured and reset ice was an alpine meadow of varied white . . . the bent grasses were fixed in blossoms of translucent glass. (p. 84)

Perhaps this is why it is inevitable that Jeremy and Bea leave their artificial jungle-like retreat for the reality of snow, wind, and cold outside: there in unimproved nature they can finally be natural.

One of Jeremy's last words is a vow that he will never leave his bed at Worlds End and that he will never be parted from his recording machine: "I am going to lie here for the rest of my life, talking, recording everything. Until I can think of nothing that I do not speak. Speaking. Until the inside and the outside are one, united" (p. 149). In assuming the identity of an Indian, in dreaming he was a buffalo, Jeremy tried to unite his inside and his outside. Now again with Bea in her jungle-garden he believes that he has achieved this desired fusion, and he wants to preserve an electronic account of his achievement. But even the garden of earthly delight is not immune to interference. Someone phones saying that Roger is alive, and Jeremy and Bea set out on the snowmobile in the blizzard.

Their destination is not clear, but if it is Notikeewin where the Winter King has awakened at last, they never make it. They vanish leaving their wrecked snowmobile on the cowcatcher of a locomotive that crossed the Cree River on the trestle bridge and Jeremy's tape recorder hanging on a bridge timber one hundred and forty-four feet directly above the river. (There is no trace of their bodies.) This machine provides Jeremy's last words, but it does not solve the question of their disappearance: that remains a mystery. Madham, however, has a theory that Jeremy and Bea saw the train coming as they approached the middle of the bridge and jumped into the river below. Madham has found out that the train was off schedule and using a different track because of the blizzard so there was no possibility that Jeremy was expecting a train to cross the bridge when it did. Madham believes that Bea and Jeremy were lost and discovered the railway tracks by accident but stuck to them because they needed "the assurance of steel rails that must and do go somewhere" (p. 157). "They ride out onto the narrow bridge as if they are levered into the very sky itself . . . they are freed of the earth, airborne, flying free." Then the train comes, "indifferent. Into the indifferent storm. . . . They have time to see the unbearable indifference. . . . The water below is indifferent" (p. 157). So, clinging to each other, they leap into the river.

Nature is an image of freedom and yet a place of darkness and death. Technology, too, has its positive and negative features. Madham believes that, caught as they were between nature and technology, Jeremy and Bea chose to be destroyed by nature, much as Paul and Liv in The Wabeno Feast chose to die naturally.[14] This romantic theory adequately explains Jeremy's end. However, his wife, Carol, doesn't agree with Madham's theory and believes instead that the accident was faked so that Jeremy could run off with Bea to be free to do as he wished, "recklessly and irrationally heading for the true wilderness," "making a clean break into the last forest" once they get off the train next day (p. 153). This equally romantic theory is as satisfying an explanation as the first. Whether Jeremy is dead or alive, his life and identity are fit material for a romantic theory: either he chooses to die by nature or to continue living in nature. Either way he abandons the complex technological world for nature.

At the end of the novel Madham says that Carol, being an easterner who "grew up protected by hills and by trees," fails to grasp the consequence of the northern prairies to human definition: "the diffusion of personality into a complex of possibilities rather than a concluded self" (p. 152). Madham himself has long ago left the prairies and has "concluded" his self as the ultimate professor. After Jeremy's disappearance Carol gives up her job in the campus Xerox Room and now lives with Madham, and her "conclusion" is as ultimate duster of his antiques. But, like Hazard

Lepage and Johnnie Backstrom, Jeremy Sadness is left with "a complex of possibilities" even though Madham has destroyed Jeremy's tapes and a verification of Madham's account of them remains forever impossible. Robert Kroetsch's first four novels, however, do not really give "a complex of possibilities"; rather, they often aim at "conclusions" that a reader is pressed into making. To borrow Frank Davey's words, they can be summed up as follows:

> All four of Kroetsch's novels deliver partially crippled men from failure by means of cataclysmic immerson in natural process --particularly in carnality, passion, and death. . . . they find in the "green world" of the wild northern landscape and of unbridled human sexuality the healing forces which can counteract the paralytic effects of a pragmatic, mechanized culture and thus return meaning and joy to individual life. . . . To Kroetsch mechanical centralizing technology is man's enemy and the land his friend.[15]

Although it seems at first that in Kroetsch's novels the natural man is destroyed by the technological man, if the matter is looked at in another way, it would be equally correct to say that the technological man, because he feels incomplete, "creates" the natural man to provide a kind of psychological completion. The technological man projects all that he lacks or has lost into another person (the natural man) and invents a suitable landscape (the wilderness of romantic pastoral in this case) that will reflect the values and personality of the natural man. Here we have the kind of process that could occur each time a writer composes a pastoral. Seen in this way The Studhorse Man and Gone Indian, for instance, show in an oblique way the psychology and processes involved in pastoral writing in general: the man who lives with new technology in a present environment full of problems from which he would like to escape remembers or imagines what a past environment and its related technologies used to be like (or could have been like), invests that environment with values he finds lacking in his own, becomes nostalgic for it, and turns it into pastoral. Thus, in spite of the comedy, parody, and irony, in spite of the ambiguous ends of his protagonists and the madness of his narrators, all of which undercut the impulse toward romantic pastoralism, Kroetsch's novels provide us with good examples of present-day pastoral literature.

CHAPTER III

MARGARET ATWOOD

Like Kroetsch, Margaret Atwood seems to be a romantic in her favouring of the natural over the technological; but her work sometimes verges on satire, and ultimately it is probably more akin to classical rather than to romantic pastoral in that neither of her first two novels advocates escape to the wilderness as the final solution to personal problems and as the goal in her narrators' quests for identity. Modern technology seems to affect the relationship between her men and woman (or she chooses to describe and disclose the personalities and values of her characters and their relation to each other in terms of technological images). In The Edible Woman Marian, who is metaphorically a part of the natural environment, is victimized by men and their technologies in a plastic, electric world (a kind of urban technological wilderness). In Surfacing that older (older because it is associated with childhood and with the primitive) natural environment comes to the fore and is seen to be exploited by men and new technology against the wishes of the narrator who identifies with that victimized landscape. The technological horizon here is seen by the narrator as identical to the line separating childhood from adult life and responsibility and the line separating good from evil: it is a line that she does not want to cross, but the end of the novel implies that such a crossing is essential to the process of finding an identity as a mature human being.

3.1 In The Edible Woman Margaret Atwood describes the plastic, "unnatural," urban world in which the narrator must search for her identity: it is a veritable electronic jungle. Peter, the "plastic" man, with his various weapons, is a danger to Marian and her search. She is identified with small, vulnerable animals--part of the organic world; Peter is described in terms of destructive technology.

On one occasion Kroetsch compared Canadian and American writers and remarked that "in both countries there is a great concern with the problem of identity. The quest, if you will, in much of the literature of both countries, is a quest not for truth or the holy grail, but a quest for the self."[1] In Kroetsch's novels the quest for the self is a quest for the natural man; the self is at least partly identified through a relationship with nature--usually wild nature rather than man-made nature in artificial gardens. The same applies to some extent to Margaret Atwood's characters: much more in Surfacing than in The Edible Woman, however. In The Edible Woman an actual relationship with nature is not part of the heroine's experience, but her identity within the novel, and that of other characters, is given to us in terms of images of nature and technology. Using the pattern that is usual in romantic pastoral, Atwood describes the negative characters in terms of technology and the more sympathetic characters in terms of nature.[2] However, although she seems to distrust modern technology and gives it negative connotations, she does satirize some aspects of romantic pastoralism.

In The Edible Woman Marian McAlpin's search for identity takes place in a plastic, technological world, one that is full of cars, telephones, supermarkets, laundromats, and high-rise apartments and office buildings.[3] Even the images of nature that Margaret Atwood uses in the novel reinforce the idea that technology is destroying nature, that technology is a strong negative force pitted against weak, defenseless nature. The sound on the residential streets of Toronto at night is a mixture of crickets and TV sets, Marian notices; nature has not yet been totally destroyed in this city. Because of the crowded conditions and because of pollution, living in Toronto is "like being in a fish-bowl full of dying pollywogs," but in this novel going back-to-nature is never presented as Marian's salvation (pp. 258-59). Living in a bowl full of living pollywogs is not the image of the good life here. The negative aspects of city life are satirized to some degree, but no solutions are presented. The air-polluting buses, the electric-eye doors and muzak in the supermarket, the brand-new, austere apartment buildings are commented upon, but no one has plans for getting rid of them. Presumably, as long as everything works, people will accept city life. For instance, the worst thing about the high-rise in which Peter lives is that the elevator and buzzer-system are not yet in service. Also, although, when it is working, the electric ceiling fan in Marian's office does little good in relieving the discomfort of a humid Toronto summer, it is bad for the morale to have it hanging there broken and unmoving: after all, machines are supposed to work.[4]

Another slightly different example is the telephone. Here the problem is not that the phones don't work; it's that phones are seen to be both positive and negative technology in the context of the novel. Much of Marian's work depends on the phone, and her social life, too, is facilitated by its use. On the other hand, the existence of the telephone makes possible the obscene calls of the Underwear Man. Telephones make it possible for people to have contact with each other or to avoid it; they make life simpler and yet sometimes more complex:

> By the time she [Marian] had got matters straightened out with Peter she had felt as though she had been trying to unsnarl herself from all the telephone lines in the city. They were prehensile, they were like snakes, they had a way of coiling back on you and getting you all wrapped up. (p. 134)

The image here is of the city as jungle and the telephone lines as dangerous snakes: an electronic jungle.

However vivid this particular image is, the city in The Edible Woman is not presented as the place of evil and the country a place of pastoral refuge (and even in Surfacing the dichotomy is not that simple). On the contrary, the characters in the novel never question the existence of Toronto as the home of opportunity but, at the same time, mark time in dull, tedious work. Part of their identity comes with the work they do. Ainsley tests defective electric toothbrushes, but she is bored working with machines and longs for a job in an art gallery. Len Slank does TV work, but he feels that he must add excitement to his life (or else live up to a stereotyped idea of what a "media person" does) by being "sort of a seducer of young girls" (p. 33). Marian makes up questionnaires for Seymour Surveys, a market research outfit. The job has no meaning for her, and because of the rigid hierarchy, she knows that promotion from her second level job to a better one on the first level will never occur. On the top level of Seymour Surveys are the executives and psychologists, "the intelligence men," who do no work with machines (p. 97). At the bottom level of the office building are the mimeo and computer machines run by "operatives" who work in the midst of "factory-like clatter" (p. 19). In the middle--Marian's level--are the interviewers who take care of the "human element."

Such specialization and separation of functions is a characteristic of highly mechanized societies. So is standardization. Even in the graduate school of the University of Toronto English department, a place one does not think of in connection with machinery, these same characteristics of society appear. In fact, the whole education system at that level, and perhaps at other levels too, is a factory, machine, or "braingrinder": Duncan explains that Fish and Trevor "used to have accents but now you can't tell anything from listening to them; after you've been in that braingrinder for a while you don't sound as though you're from anywhere" (p. 98). Besides this required uniformity, a dangerous degree of specialization is inevitable once a person has gone as far as graduate school. Duncan complains:

> Once you've gone this far you aren't fit for anything else. Something happens to your mind. You're overqualified, overspecialized, and everybody knows it. Nobody in any other game would be crazy enough to hire me. . . . I'll have to be a slave in the paper-mines for all time. (p. 97)

Just as Duncan is a slave to his English studies, so is each character to the work he or she does. For instance, even if Marian quit her job at Seymour Surveys, a B.A. would insure that her next job would be much the same. Everyone is in a rut like "a frenzied armadillo . . . going around in figure-eights . . . it's a form of psychosis, and even if you set the animals free after they go like that they'll just run around in the same pattern" (p. 95). The implication is that it is the technological environment and the kinds of work it values that make people into crazy animals.

Even though Peter Wollander does not at first strike the reader as being "a frenzied armadillo," what we see of his work and leisure makes it clear that he has in mind a pattern of success into which he wants to fit himself--and Marian. Peter is a young lawyer, and the images that Atwood uses to describe him make it clear that he is the type of man that she labels "American" in Surfacing. His job is important to him, and he uses it, just as he uses everything that comes his way, to his own advantage. Even before Peter makes his first appearance in the novel, we find out that he lives in an expensive apartment at one-third the official rent because of his part in "a piece of contract manipulating" (p. 57). The apartment that he has obtained in this dishonest manner is a totally appropriate habitat for a "plastic" man. It is in a brand new building near a slum area that is gradually being torn down to make way for high-rise apartments. The building is described in terms of a living body, an embryo because of its unfinished state, yet plastic and hard:

> the shiny surfaces . . . which would later give the building its expensive gloss, its beetle-hard internal shell, had not yet begun to secrete themselves. The rough grey underskin of subflooring and unplastered wall-surface was still showing, and raw wires dangled like loose nerves from most of the sockets. (p. 57)

Gradually the building is completed, the raw material is "transmuted by an invisible process of digestion and assimilation" almost as though it feeds on the workers who build it (p. 225). Within the shell of the high-rise Peter lives in his own neat, austere apartment--a contrast to Ainsley's "muskeg" of a bedroom and the mess at Joe's and Clara's house. He is so far the only resident, and this situation provides a kind of visual metaphor for Peter's emotional state, for his identity as plastic, technological man. Everyone else in the novel lives with someone else either in a state of temporary or permanent involvement--Marian with Ainsley, Clara with Joe and their children, Duncan with Trevor and Fish, the landlady with her daughter, and even Len Slank, who lives alone at first, moves in with Joe and Clara during a crisis in his life. Not Peter, however. He lives completely alone with not even a neighbour nearby, and with no apparent need of one.

Peter is a "nicely packaged," good-looking man: "ordinariness raised to perfection," as Marian observes (p. 146, p. 61). Everything about him is neat and tidy; even the hairs on his arm seem to be "arranged in rows" (p. 61). At one point Marian notices the "functional spareness of his body" (p. 65). Like a piece of Bauhaus furniture, there is nothing extraneous about Peter; he is made up of only what is absolutely necessary and useful. He is a "plastic" man, and even his relationship with Marian could be called "plastic" although the word "veneer" is used instead: "Over the summer he had become a pleasant habit, and as we had been seeing each other only on weekends the veneer hadn't had a chance to wear off" (p. 61). However, the veneer does wear off; or, perhaps more accurately, Marian sees what is lurking behind the façade of civilization that Peter wears with such elegance.

Peter's real identity is revealed gradually by means of images of technology: weapons such as rifles, pistols, and knives, car and cameras. He is an educated lawyer, an apartment-dwelling man, but he collects rifles, pistols and knives, and displays them on a wall in his bedroom. He never uses them during the course of the novel, but they seem to be souvenirs of past hunts. When Peter tells Len about the time he went rabbit-hunting with Trigger, he reveals the savagery and violence that are not ordinarily apparent in him:

> One shot, right through the heart. . . . I whipped out my knife, good knife, German steel, and slit the belly and took her by the hind legs and gave her one hell of a crack, like a whip you see, and the next thing you know there was blood and guts all over the place. (p. 69)

Perhaps because of Peter's use of the feminine pronoun, "her," Marian begins to see herself as the rabbit victim. As he talks, her mind withdraws from the immediate situation and becomes a movie screen upon which images of the slaughter are projected:

> I saw it as though it was a slide projected on a screen in a dark room . . . Peter stood with his back to me in a plaid shirt, his rifle slung on his shoulder. . . . the sunlight . . . fell in shafts down through the anonymous trees, splashed with blood . . . I couldn't see the rabbit. (p. 69)

Marian can't see the rabbit because in her mind she has become the rabbit. As though she is herself the cornered rabbit about to be slaughtered, "something inside [her] started to dash about in dithering mazes of panic" (p, 70). In the Ladies' Powder Room she projects this identification with the rabbit onto the roll of toilet paper which then appears "helpless and white and furry, waiting passively for the end" (p. 70).

Marian, however, cannot wait passively for the end; unconsciously she rejects the identity of passive, slaughtered rabbit and runs away from Peter. His response is to get his car "to head her off": "All at once it was no longer a game. The blunt tankshape was threatening. It was threatening that Peter had not given chase on foot but had enclosed himself in the armour of the car" (p. 72, p. 73). Peter has declared war on Marian, and in his machine he has an unfair advantage over Marian who is unarmed and on foot. Nevertheless, Marian craftily dodges the pursuer, and Peter is forced to leave the car and "stalk" her on foot. Later at Len's apartment Marian again identifies with small endangered creatures and attempts to escape by crawling under the bed: "I myself was underground, I had dug myself a private burrow" (p. 76). When Peter and Len lift the bed, she scuttles out like a crayfish with her dress "furred" with dust. Again she tries running away and again Peter pursues her in his car, which becomes as destructive as a bullet released from a gun: Peter's "eyes narrowed as though he was taking aim. Then he gritted his teeth together and stepped murderously hard on the accelerator" (p. 81). He doesn't hurt Marian, but he does ruin someone's front lawn and hedge by using his car as a missile.

Guns and cars are obvious weapons, but in Peter's hands so are cameras. After the slaughter of the rabbit, Peter stopped, he says, to get "some good shots of the whole mess" (p. 69). The camera makes it possible for him to "preserve" the destruction so that he can re-experience the event and enjoy it over and over again. At his party Peter spends half his time taking pictures preserving the present moment for future enjoyment. (He is opposite to Duncan for whom only the present moment exists and who would never take pictures to preserve that present moment for the future.) Marian becomes panic-stricken when Peter wants to take her picture. The same word, "shots," is used in connection with camera and gun, and to Marian "shots of you" seem equivalent to "shots at you." At one point Peter "raised the camera and aimed it at her; his mouth opened in a snarl of teeth. There was a blinding flash of light" (p. 244). Fortunately this is a picture of a friend across the room, but Peter promises to "get" Marian later.

The reason why Marian doesn't want her present self preserved in a photo is that she is afraid that her appearance will become her permanent identity. With her "enamelled hair," her elaborate make-up, her new red party dress, her borrowed jewellery, "her finely-adjusted veneers," all of which are "not her," Marian fears that a picture taken at this time will make sure that she will be preserved in that form--and the role that goes with it--and be trapped forever (p. 217, p. 229): "Once he pulled the trigger she would be stopped, fixed indissolubly in that gesture, that single stance, unable to move or change" (p. 245). She feels like a threatened, hunted animal again: "She should never have worn red. It made her a perfect target"; but to get out of Peter's apartment and make an escape she relies on her dress to "act as a protective camouflage that would blend her with the scenery" (p. 244, p. 245). She imagines Peter's face "with its hunting eyes" as he follows her "stalking her through the crisp empty streets . . . That dark intent marksman with his aiming eye had been there all the time, hidden by the other layers, waiting for her at the dead centre: a homicidal maniac with a lethal weapon in his hands" (p. 255, pp. 245-46).

Peter's identity has been revealed to Marian; he is a "normal" man and yet a "homicidal maniac" at the same time. He is a man "frustrated by complications, he wanted simplicity"; and violence, especially violence that is inflicted at a distance through technological means, is simple (p. 149). Technology can be complicated and the consequences of using technology may lead to unforeseen complications, but violence in itself can be seen as a primitive urge for simplicity and order. Machines enable a little muscle to go a long way, enable man to see himself as superman or even god-like, and enable him to smooth away many of life's complications: "His satisfaction with what he considered a forceful display of muscle was obvious. It irritated me that he should appropriate as his own the credit due to the back wheels of his car" (p. 81). Such an association with machines on Peter's part has an interesting, although unfortunate, effect on Marian. The day after their engagement Marian notices that when Peter talks to her "he sounded as though he'd just bought a shiny new car. I gave him a tender chrome-plated smile; that is, I meant the smile to express tenderness, but my mouth felt stiff and bright and somehow expensive" (p. 88). On another occasion she feels that

> he was sizing her up as he would a new camera, trying to find the central complex of wheels and tiny mechanisms, the possible weak points, the kind of future performance to be expected: the springs of the machine. He wanted to know what made her tick. (p. 150)

Peter values cars and cameras; and when Marian is appreciated or observed in a special way by him, she feels that he is pressing an alien, mechanical identity on her. Even marriage he views as a kind of machine or system. Marian suspects that Peter has bought a marriage manual when she finds him looking at her "almost clinically" (p. 149). It would be another "how to work it" book to add to his collection of books on cameras, his law books, his detective novels, and his car manual. They all fit into "his brand of logic" and identify him with technology (p. 130).

3.2 Marian tries to escape an identity as consumer and consumed and to choose a new identity that is neither killer nor victim. That Duncan is also a danger to Marian's identity (a danger which she probably does not see) is made clear in the technological imagery (and the imagery of death) that is used to describe him.

Subconsciously, if not consciously, Marian feels that she is a commodity to be used and devoured by Peter, and at the same time she sees her own part in our destructive consumer society. An identity as consumer and consumed is not one that she is happy with, and she tries to escape from it. Her body rebels; gradually she stops eating most of the foods that she has been accustomed to eating. As Duncan points out to her, she might be "rebelling against the system" by starting with the digestive system (p. 192). This withdrawal from food starts when Peter sits in a restaurant cutting and eating his steak, and Marian thinks, "violence in connection with Peter seemed incongruous" (p. 150). But, indeed, he is a very destructive person as Marian realizes once her mind makes the connection between Peter and the "removed violence" of the sniper who killed nine people:

> He wasn't the kind who would hit anyone with his fist or even use a knife. When he chose violence it was a removed violence, a manipulation of specialized instruments, the finger guiding but never touching, he himself watching the explosion from a distance; the explosion of flesh and blood. It was a violence of the mind, almost like magic: you thought it and it happened. (p. 151)

Although his hands are "bloodless," there is a kind of distanced violence in Peter who sits there "operating on" and "carving" his steak and eating with such enjoyment. It is quite likely that in her present state of mind Marian would rather have seen Peter hunt an animal or kill a cow and eat raw flesh than be an accomplice in his "bloodless," civilized dinner. It is the "bloodless," "removed" quality of the violence that appalls her; and, of course, it is through sophisticated devices like airplanes, bombs, rifles, and other guns that violence against people and animals can become "bloodless" and "removed". And even more sophisticated a technology is the division of labour, the specialization (the "manipulation of specialized instruments" by specialized people), that is involved in getting us the food we eat. Marian realizes that she has never killed the cow from which come the steaks she's eaten or even pulled the carrots that she's enjoyed. All the primary violence has been committed by someone else. When Peter says, "A good meal always makes you feel a little more human," Marian's humanity rebels, and she stops eating her steak (p. 152). Eventually her body refuses to take in any food that has been living (such as meat and carrots) or looks as though it is living (such as synthetic canned rice pudding and sponge cake).

In order for Marian to try to find her identity (and to eat again) she has to run away from Peter at their engagement party. However, that can be seen as a negative or incomplete action, and she must return to confront him. She asserts her identity and refuses to continue being seen by Peter as a commodity that exists for his pleasure and convenience, and she offers him the cake-woman as a substitute for herself.[5] He rejects the awareness that would go with the eating of the cake. As a sign of the reintegration of her own identity, Marian eats the cake-woman herself (with help from Duncan), but ironically part of that identity involves being a consumer. As Duncan tells her later, "You're back to so-called reality, you're a consumer" (p. 281). She accepts her role as consumer within a consumer society, a society that would need a major revolution to do away with such roles. After all, one must eat to live, and food is there to be eaten: "that's what you get for being food," Marian tells her cake-woman who is no longer woman but just cake now (p. 270).

In addition, even while seeing Peter for what he is, she stops being afraid of him: "Peter was not the enemy after all, he was just a normal human being like most other people. . . . It was Duncan that was the mutation" (p. 271). Probably this assessment of his identity is true, but Peter _is_ dangerous although "normal" and like so many other men. "It was easy to see him as normal and safe in the afternoon, but that didn't alter things" (p. 271): normality can hide darkness and violence which can surface anytime, Marian realizes. After Peter leaves for the last time, she has a nostalgic picture of him as though he were a photograph hung on the wall, a photograph of "a style that had gone out of fashion":

> She could see him in her mind, posed jauntily in the foreground of an elegant salon with chandeliers and draperies, impeccably dressed, a glass of scotch in one hand; his foot was on the head of a stuffed lion and he had an eyepatch over one eye. Beneath one arm was strapped a revolver. . . . He would definitely succeed. (p. 272)

But although in this picture Peter looks harmless enough, a kind of fake hunter whose revolver is more a stage prop than a weapon, the novel suggests that he remains a danger loose in the world.

Marian has learned from her experience with Peter that "normal" men can be violent, dangerous, and destructive of her identity. Because she shares the cake-woman with Duncan, however, it is not at all clear whether she has learned that "mutations" like Duncan can be equally dangerous: thus the ending of the novel is more ambiguous than triumphant.[6] Because he is an unusual and fascinating person and treats Marian in a manner that is very different from Peter's, the similarity between the two men is not immediately apparent. However, Duncan, like Peter, is a man "frustrated by complications, he [too] wanted simplicity" (p. 149). This desire is demonstrated in his association with irons and laundromat washers. Marian's and Duncan's second meeting takes place in a laundromat where he explains: "I watch laundromat washers the way other people watch television, it's soothing because you always know what to expect and you don't have to think about it" (p. 94). For similar reasons he loves to iron clothes: "I like flattening things out, getting rid of the wrinkles" (p. 95). He claims that he is not "a chronic ironer" but is subject to binges of ironing (p. 141). Put in this way, an addiction to ironing can be compared to addiction to alcohol or drugs; both are attempts to escape reality. (When Marian brings him some clothes to iron, Duncan greets her at the door with "Got the stuff?"-- p. 136.) According to Duncan, ironing relieves tension: "Ironing's nice and simple . . . I get all tangled up in words when I'm putting together those interminable papers . . . and ironing--well, you straighten things out and get them flat" (p. 142).

He likes flat surfaces, no wrinkles (that is, complexities) in his life, and it bothers him that nothing that he does is final (that is, the clothes get wrinkled again). As a defence against complexity he would like to be an amoeba, the lowest form of life, because it is "immortal . . . and sort of shapeless and flexible. Being a person is getting too complicated" (p. 201). Duncan will not allow Marian to become a complication in his life, and for the time being she doesn't mind him using her "as long as she knew what for" (p. 183). He admits that she is "just another substitute for the laundromat," and at one point during their night at the Victoria and Albert "he stroked her with his hand, gently, straightening her out, almost as though he was ironing her" (p. 145, p. 254). On the surface there is a great deal of difference between Peter's "stalking" Marian and Duncan's "ironing" her, but actually each man wants her to "fit" into the pattern of his life and each is a threat to her identity. For instance, as a counterpart to the occasion when Marian and Peter make love in his bathtub, Duncan suggests once that he and Marian make love inside a clothes dryer at the laundromat (p. 248).

Occasionally Duncan is described in animal or mechanical terms, but to reinforce the undesirable, unhealthy quality of Duncan, Atwood usually describes him as a corpse or mummy. Although, when wearing a shaggy sweater, he seems to have "a furry skin" and nuzzles up to Marian like a starving dog, at another point he seems to be a robot, and he and Marian kiss because "someone had pulled a switch" (p. 171, p. 100). At the movie he mechanically eats pumpkin seeds, and Marian hears him make a "small clock-like sound" (p. 125). If he could, he would give up his identity as a food-eating human being; he would "prefer to be fed through the main artery" (p. 192). In fact, he looks as though he subsists on a diet of bread crusts and water: he is "cadaverously thin" like "an emaciated figure in a medieval woodcut" with skin the colour of old linen, an "almost skeletal ribcage," and a body like "tissue paper or parchment stretched on a frame of wire coathangers" (p. 48, p. 256, p. 100). He is a night creature who can't bear close scrutiny in the light of day; under fluorescent light he appears "unearthly," and his dry, cold fingers make Marian think he is a living skeleton (p. 95). It occurs to Marian that "if she were to reach out and touch him at that moment he would begin to crumble" like a mummy, and Duncan reassures her by saying, "Don't worry . . . I'm not going to return from the tomb" (p. 187, p. 188). Another possible identity that he presents is that of a supernatural creature or a changeling: "really I'm not human at all, I come from the underground," Duncan says of himself (p. 141).

The images of death and of the mechanical that supply Duncan's identity are brought together in the description of his ideal landscape:

> I have this great plan for permanent leaves on trees, it's a waste for them having to produce a new lot each year; and come to think of it there's no reason at all why they have to be green, either; I'd have them white. Black trunks and white leaves. I can hardly wait till it snows, this city in the summer has altogether too much vegetation, it's stifling, and then it all falls off and lies around in the gutters. . . . the place I come from . . . has no vegetation. A lot of people wouldn't like it. It's the smelting plants that do it . . . the chemical fumes have burnt the trees for miles around, it's barren, nothing but the barren rock, even grass won't grow on most of it. (pp. 143-44)

Because he finds the variety of nature overwhelming and offensive, Duncan would take the colour out of the landscape, and in his desire for simple, static, and deathlike perfection he prefers that trees have permanent leaves that never wither and fall. His ideal landscape, which resembles a flat, white, ironed sheet, is not far removed from the actual

Sudbury landscape (one destroyed by technology) covered with snow. In Toronto he likes to visit his favourite ravine in winter when the snow hides the junk people throw into it and when the thick summer vegetation has gone. His favourite place in this ravine is the large pit "especially now in winter, it's so close to absolute zero. It makes me feel human. By comparison. . . . in the snow you're as near as possible to nothing" (p. 263). Here it seems that Duncan wants to remain a human being but barely so. At one point at the Victoria and Albert Hotel he seems to be no more than a patch of snow to Marian: Duncan is described as a "seemingly-passive surface, the blank white formless thing lying insubstantial in the darkness before her" (p. 254). In the ravine they lie down and leave two body imprints on the snow, but before he shows Marian how to get out, Duncan steps on the imprints "first on his own and then on hers, smearing the snow with his foot" (p. 265). He is trying to smooth out the "wrinkles" in the landscape, but he refuses to have a hand in smoothing out the complications in Marian's life -- her problems he leaves to her. When she turns, he remains "a dark shape against the snow, crouched on the edge and gazing into the empty pit" although she half expected that he would have "evaporated into the white expanse of the ravine" (p. 215). Duncan is an enigmatic character, rather shapeless and hard to pin down, one who leaves no tracks--and perhaps is more dangerous (the imagery associated with Duncan is as negative as that associated with Peter) than Peter precisely because of these qualities.

3.3 In spite of using images taken from nature and technology to identify her characters in a conventional romantic fashion, Atwood's romantic pastoralism is a qualified one at best: for instance, she satirizes romantic notions that are often associated with the search for identity and with romantic pastoralism.

Unlike the narrator of Surfacing, Marian never tries to find her identity by means of a sexual experience in nature. A seedy hotel room is the scene of Marian's only sexual encounter with Duncan, and her affair with Peter takes place almost entirely in his apartment bedroom--or bathtub. One of the few exceptions that she recalls is the one time they drove out into the country. It took four hours to find the perfect place, but this pseudo-Lawrentian encounter was spoiled for her by a "scratchy blanket" and "thoughts of farmers and cows" (p. 60). Obviously Marian didn't enjoy this experience of sex in nature and feels free to comment wryly upon it; perhaps it was an idea that Peter got out of a novel or magazine--a second-hand idea that has become a boring cliché. The traditional linking of sex and nature is also satirized through the use of a bleak, unpastoral, wintry landscape. For instance, since Marian feels that she can't meet Duncan in a place more public than a laundromat or a movie theatre, parks provide a kind of retreat from people. The park that they go to is spoken of as an island and a "calm open eye of silence," a place of escape: "The city, the time outside the white circle of the Park, had almost vanished" (p. 171). However, because of the cold, the escape is momentary and unsatisfying to Marian. The same can be said of her walk with Duncan in the ravine; and when she lies down there on the cold, white sheet of snow, it is at arm's length from him. It is evident in this novel that Atwood refuses to use the clichéd romantic association of sex and nature in a serious way.

Pregnancy and children as means for a woman to find her identity are also viewed in a thoroughly unromantic way. Clara in the seventh month of her third pregnancy is described as looking "like a boa-constrictor that has swallowed a watermelon" and "like a strange vegetable growth, a bulbous tuber that had sent out four thin white roots and a tiny pale-yellow flower" (p. 31, p. 32). She describes the children as leeches, barnacles and limpets--she being the ship they cling to. A "tide of dirt rose around" Clara in her messy home, and her babies are a part of that engulfing tide (p. 37). Up until now she had been against the use of the pill but vows to use it to prevent further pregnancies. Perhaps she sees that the technology of birth control will enable her to cope with what nature has thrust upon her (that is, the capacity to produce a baby every year). In the matter of having children Clara seems to be the realist while Ainsley seems to be the romantic. From literature and the media Ainsley has received the idea that having a baby is "natural" and good, and will serve the Creative Life Force at the same time as it fulfulls her "deepest femininity" (p. 41). She believes that becoming pregnant and having a baby will give her an identity as a woman. However, her ideas sound programmed; that is, she says what it is currently in vogue to say: Marian observes that "when she [Ainsley] says that 'Every woman should have at least one baby,' she sounded like a voice on the radio saying that every woman should have at least one electric hair-dryer" (p. 41). Having a baby may very well be "natural," but the way she goes about getting pregnant is rather "unnatural" (and hilarious) because she is excessively concerned about the genetic make-up of the man. What she is doing is "natural" in the same way that a pitcher-plant can be called "natural" as it lies in wait for a poor unsuspecting insect (p. 75).

She uses Len "in effect as an inexpensive substitute for artificial insemination with a devastating lack of concern for his individuality" (p. 122). In fact, the result will be a kind of test-tube baby even though it is not being produced in a test-tube (p. 154). Ainsley completely ignores the fact that she is subverting the identity of another person, and the effect of such a person as Ainsley on the identity of the baby that she will produce is left to the reader's imagination.

That Ainsley has a programmed view of what is "natural" and that Margaret Atwood finds it necessary to satirize commonly held assumptions about nature is not surprising. These false assumptions are prevalent in society and are created primarily (as seen in the context of this novel) by popular psychology and sociology and by the advertizing industry which specializes in avoiding "calling the housefly by its actual name" (p. 28). Nature can be unpleasant, unclean and messy so it must be disinfected, sterilized and made unreal and acceptably artificial before it is served up to the public as a saleable commodity. In the Moose Beer commercials

> the fisherman wading in the stream, scooping the trout into his net, was too tidy: he looked as though his hair had just been combed, a few strands glued neatly to his forehead to show he was windblown. And the fish also was unreal; it had no slime, no teeth, no smell; it was a clever toy, metal and enamel. The hunter who had killed a deer stood posed and urbane, no twigs in his hair, his hands bloodless. Of course you didn't want anything in an advertisement to be ugly or upsetting; it wouldn't do, for instance, to have a deer with its tongue sticking out. (p. 150)

This image of the wilderness is a cliché which is used to sell more than beer; it is used to sell men an identity they wish they had, an identity as great hunters and lovers of the outdoors. The beer is advertized as being capable of enhancing the man's enjoyment as he hunts, fishes or relaxes on "a real man's holiday" in the wilderness, and by implication the urban man who doesn't know how to hold a gun, who doesn't own a fishing rod, and who has never been north of Orillia can vicariously experience the manly pleasures of the three activities mentioned simply by drinking Moose Beer (p. 26). All it takes to "put the tang of the wilderness in YOUR life today" is a glass of Moose Beer (p. 26). This suggests that one who lives and works in an urban centre far from nature, the source of revitalization, finds it essential to escape from that plastic world now and then. However, although the identities of people who live in a technological urban world are made narrow by that environment, Atwood's satire makes clear that it would take more than drinking a glass of Moose Beer, having a baby, or having a sexual experience out in the country for them to find new identities and enhance their lives.

3.4 In Surfacing the narrator's search for identity involves the recognition that her hatred of technology is connected with her reaction against her father's belief in reason and his (classical) pastoral ideal whose image is the garden. Romantically, she sees her mother, who represents the non-rational, as a better guide in her search.

In The Edible Woman Atwood seems to be making fun of some of the activities usually associated with romantic pastoralism. However, the main activity, which is the search for one's identity in the wilderness, is one that she deals with in Surfacing, and here it is difficult to know whether she favours the narrator's search for identity or undermines it in several ways. In Surfacing the finding of an identity, or perhaps the recognition of an already existing identity, is the crucial experience for the unnamed narrator, and it seems to depend on what she learns about her relationship with nature and technology while she searches for her missing father in the Quebec wilderness. She has spent most, if not all of her life searching for an identity that she can call "good." The trouble here, however, is that she has assumed that the identity of a "good" person is predicated on one being innocent and powerless and, thus, on being against technology, which seems to her to be inevitably linked with power and evil. Her search for identity involves escape rather than confrontation until near the end of the novel where she does have moments of insight and until the very end where she is left at the moment of decision that could give her search for identity a new direction. However, if wilderness in itself can be seen as insufficient, although important, in the narrator's search for identity, Surfacing is not the romantic pastoral it at first appears to be.

The narrator's escape from the kind of identity that she has decided she does not want involves a rejection of her parents' values and later a withdrawal from a life in the city which is characterized by highly complex technologies to a retreat in the wilderness north of Montreal. Life in the city, a place of "electricity and distraction," is talked about by the four main characters, but they have already left the city when the story starts and at the end the narrator is left on the brink of deciding whether to go back to the city or not.[7] Therefore, the focus of the story is the narrator's search for identity in a wilderness retreat.[8] Actually there are two types of retreat described in the novel: the one in the present time is the narrator's and can be labelled romantic, primitive, and wild; the one that was established in the past by the narrator's father is classical, rational, and tame. The narrator's espousal of the wilderness pastoral retreat can be seen as a rejection of everything that her father's garden retreat stands for, but the narrator's extreme stand, extreme to the point of madness, puts some aspects of this denial into question. In order to understand her reaction against her father's pastoral ideal and her related hatred of technology, however, it is necessary to examine the life and ideas of her parents, especially of her father, and the ways in which she thinks they were failures.

As far as we can judge, the narrator's parents were city people (even though the father might have been brought up on a farm) who saw the wilderness as a refuge, a place of simplicity and goodness. The father was a scientist, a botanist, who seems to have divided his working life between a large city in winter and the Quebec wilderness in summer--at least when his two children were of school age. After retirement, he and his wife moved permanently to the cedar cabin on the island. He was a "voluntary recluse" and desired isolation above all (p. 11). It wasn't that he hated people, his daughter explains; it was that he found them irrational and less consistent and predictable than animals (p. 59). So he withdrew:

> he split us between two anonymities, the city and the bush. . . . Even the village had too many people for him, he needed an island, a place where he could recreate not the settled farm life of his own father but that of the earliest ones who arrived when there was nothing but forest and no ideologies but the ones they brought with them. When they say Freedom they never quite mean it, what they mean is freedom from interference. (p. 59)

On the island the parents built a cabin and made a garden. The house is ten miles from the nearest habitation and is hidden completely by trees: "camouflage was one of my father's policies" (p. 32). It was built of cedar, and the father explained the reason for his use of this type of material: "'I didn't build it to last forever' and I thought then, Why not? Why didn't you?" (p. 34). He was wiser than she was--to build with "forever" in mind is to impose oneself even more on nature than he has done, a thing he hesitated doing. The garden, however, is a kind of improvement (and imposition) on nature. It is a sign of order, and the fence is the border between order and chaos. The natural soil on the island couldn't grow anything so the father and mother brought in better soil and fertilized it with compost; they also built a fence and gate:

> The fence is impregnable; it can keep out everything but weed seeds, birds, insects and the weather. Beneath it is a two-foot-deep moat, paved with broken glass, smashed jars and bottles, and covered with gravel and earth, the woodchucks and skunks can't burrow under. Frogs and snakes get through but they are permitted. (pp. 179-80)

The narrator condemns such improvements on nature: "The garden is a stunt, a trick. It could not exist without the fence" (p. 180). The garden, however, aided them in being more self-sufficient and less dependent on tinned foods for survival; and they required more than fishing and gathering berries could provide.

It is true that such a pastoral life is artificial and doesn't exist as an ideal for such real country people as Paul, who "justified for him [father] his own ideal of the simple life; but for Paul the anachronism was imposed, he'd never chosen it" (p. 23). Perhaps, however, it was the only satisfactory compromise that was possible for a man of the father's temperament and beliefs during World War II. Although by saying that he would have fought in the war "in defence of science perhaps," the narrator suggests that her father was forward-looking and "modern," in reality he himself can be seen as a kind of anachronism (p. 59). He was a twentieth-century scientist, but he was also an eighteenth-century man of reason--and perhaps, at bottom, the two are really the same thing. Like Drummond MacKay in The Wabeno Feast, his identity seems to have depended on a belief in rationality, self-sufficiency, and perfectibility: "he believed that with the proper guide books you could do everything yourself" (p. 38). He admired the eighteenth-century rationalists who knew "the secret of the golden mean, the balanced life" (p. 38). In his collection of eighteenth-century writers (Burns, Boswell, Thompson, Goldsmith, Cowper) it is significant that Swift is missing: Gulliver's Travels would have been a corrective to any complete reliance on reason and logic. Also, if he had read more extensively, he would have discovered that there was something wrong with all his favourite eighteenth-century writers, that their lives were anything but balanced, and that they were really the disaffected children of the Age of Reason. However, he didn't, and his belief in reason remained intact at that time.

Nevertheless, at the end of his life he saw the incompleteness of a life of reason and became interested in Indian rock paintingsthat mark the sacred places where one "could learn the truth" (p. 145). Ironically, in his search for these paintings, he drowned in the lake with his camera weighing him down, almost as though the world of unreason (helped by a piece of human technology) were getting revenge upon a rationalist.[9] The narrator has a vision of "what [her] father has become" after staying alone in the wilderness for years (p. 187). She comments that "he has realized he was an intruder; the cabin, the fences, the fires and paths were violations . . . He wants it ended, the borders abolished, he wants the forest to flow back into the places his mind cleared: reparation" (p. 186). It is impossible to know if this is the verdict the father came to about himself, if he indeed regarded "logic" or reason to be a total failure or simply incomplete in showing people "not only how to see but how to act" (p. 153).

Although the father and mother are similar in their pacifism and

and their concern for the garden, their daughter seems to see a marked difference between the two. While the father stands for the rational part of man, the mother seems to be identified with the irrational or instinctual part. The narrator comments, "My father explained everything but my mother never did, which only convinced me that she had the answers but wouldn't tell" (p. 74). The mental picture the narrator has of her mother is of the woman scaring off a bear "as if she knew a foolproof magic formula: gesture and word" (p. 79). The mother is not restricted by reason or logic--as a child, she had tried to fly and broke both her ankles. (The father would never even have tried.) Her illnesses were seen by her children as "only natural phases, like cocoons" (p. 35). She always recovered and seemed the same as before, until death struck her down and the narrator felt disappointed that there was no return that time. Whereas the father "knows the bush," the mother can be said to have loved it (p. 19). When her work in the house and garden was finished each day, she spent hours walking in the forest, and the birds trusted her to the point of eating out of her hand. However, the narrator finds that her mother's diary consists only of a record of the weather and work done on each day--to provide a guide to future years' planting. There were "no reflections, no emotions" recorded, and again the narrator is disappointed (p. 22). She had expected her mother to guide her in her search for an identity, and her mother seems to have provided her with nothing.

The narrator considers both her parents as failures out of touch with the world: "prehistoric," "remote as Eskimoes or mastodons" (p. 144). At the time she needed them most she felt unable to call on them. After her abortion nine years ago, she never went back home again and never told them why. The reason is their "perilous innocence, closing them in glass, their artificial garden, greenhouse. They didn't teach us about evil, they didn't understand about it" (p. 144). It is possible that they did understand much more about evil than she suspects and that their understanding was the cause of their withdrawal into a garden retreat. However, it is likely that they can be faulted with overprotectiveness of their children, especially of their daughter, and with providing little help that would enable her to relate positively to modern technology and to grow from child to adult.

3.5 The existence of evil, especially in herself, is something that the narrator refuses to recognize as a component of the "good" human being. She identifies evil with reason and technology and feels herself to be a victim of the men who wield these weapons: such a stereotyped identification is frequent in romantic pastoralism.

The narrator and her brother had to learn about evil from other people. The brother, being older, learned first and taught his sister. Life in the Quebec wilderness was peaceful in wartime; the bombs, concentration camps, and death were not real to her because she never saw the newsreels. She learned of all this by means of her brother's drawings which were full of violence, planes, tanks, spaceships, and rayguns. (Hers were of happy rabbits, Easter eggs, and fashions.) Her brother was the one who imposed moral distinctions on living creatures: "There had to be a good kind and a bad kind of everything," and the bad kind could, and should, be killed (p. 38). The brother caught small animals and kept them in jars and sometimes forgot to feed them. The narrator once threw out the dead ones and freed the still living ones, but because her brother was so angry with what she had done, she never did it again: "I was afraid to let them out again. Because of my fear they were killed" (p. 131). And on another occasion she was definitely an accomplice in catching and throwing the "bad" leeches on the fire even though leeches never bothered them (p. 131). The actions of the two children show the failure of their father's belief in reason. Obviously neither parent taught the boy to trap animals and be cruel to them, or taught the girl to be afraid of releasing them once she knew where they were hidden. Obviously the boy knew that his parents would not approve of his laboratory because he took pains to keep it hidden. The parents "prohibited cruelty," but that didn't stop the children from being cruel (p. 132). The school and the rest of the world outside their home can be partly blamed for their knowledge of evil, but even before they went to school the two children played at being animals with the parents in the role of human enemy, and once they killed a doll and threw her into the water even though they had been taught that killing, except in the case of food and enemies, was wrong.

It is clear that evil is inborn. The brother accepted that fact and was ready for the world by the time he left home to become a geologist or mineral explorer. The narrator, however, was "not prepared for the average, its needless cruelties and lies. My brother saw the danger early. To immerse oneself, join in the war, or to be destroyed. Though there ought to be other choices" (p. 189). Her choice was to develop an identity as "an escape artist of sorts" and escape into false memories and irresponsibility (p. 72). As a child the narrator escaped into drawing an Easter-egg world where it was always summer and everyone was happy. And even as an adult she is unwilling or unable to face the fact of evil even though she is as guilty of it as anyone else. She has been an accomplice in the death of her brother's specimens and in the death of the fetus in her womb. Likewise, she associates the leeches that she helped her brother burn with Anna, whom she does not help, after David makes Anna pose nude for the camera and she escapes him by jumping into the lake: "her skin was covered with sand and pine needles like a burned leech" (p. 136). Again the narrator is an accomplice in an act of irrational cruelty because she avoids confrontation at all cost. The essential difference between the identities that the narrator and her brother have chosen is indicated by their different ways of fishing. Whereas he fished by technique, she fished by prayer: "He got more fish but I could pretend mine were willing, they had chosen to die and forgiven me in advance" (p. 64). The father and brother relied on reason and technique, but the narrator felt that her non-rational, "good" methods were superior.

However, in her relationship with a third man, a middle-aged art teacher who became her lover, she seems to have lost faith in her own methods and felt herself to be a victim of reason. She changes her story about this man from accusing him for making her an unwilling human incubator in which he has made "a replica of himself" to blaming him for taking away her loved child (p. 34, p. 48). She seems to have felt that there was something wrong with their relationship: "he was an idealist . . . He didn't want our relationship to influence anything; it was to be kept separate from life. A certificate framed on the wall, his proof that he was still young" (pp. 148-49). She admits that she worshipped and idolized this man, but she never realizes that she should blame herself for choosing such a man as a lover in the first place, a man with a wife and children whose primary commitment could never be to her. She does with justification blame him, however, for steering her away from "real" art to commercial art. She doesn't say that he was wrong to stress the useful, but by making herself useful to him and to the publishers who hire her as illustrator, she has prostituted her body and her talents. Like her father, this man is a "voice of reason." Her pregnancy was "an accident," he said, a problem to be solved, and he found a solution that did not consider her feelings; and she, in acquiescing, confirmed her identity as a victim (p. 138).

For the narrator, her father, her brother, and her first lover come to stand for the dangers of "the severed head"--intellect severed from emotion and from recognition of the powers of the irrational. When she tries to remember her father's face, for instance, she can't; she can only remember the cards with which he used to test her arithmetic: "His way. Everything had to be measured" (p. 104). Because her feelings are dead, she treats Joe, her present lover, as a thing and the words used to describe her attitude to him are mathematical ones: "I sum him up, dividing him into categories" (p. 42). Her living death is caused by the amputation of her body from her head:

> The trouble is all in the knob at the top of our bodies. I'm not against the body or the head either: only the neck, which creates the illusion that they are separate. . . . if the head is detached from the body both of them will die. (p. 76)
>
> At some point my neck must have closed over, pond freezing or a wound, shutting me into my head. (p. 105)

To the narrator excessive reliance on the head, on technique, has led to all our problems--national (including social) and personal.[10] For her the national and the personal are connected in the person of her father, a man whose language was the language of "numbers, the voice of reason" (p. 185). Her search for him is, in a way, a search for a way to forgive him for what he has done. Only near the end does she put into words what she considers his great crime to have been: "order is made with knives. His job was wrong, he was really a surveyor, he learned the trees, naming and counting them so the others could level and excavate" (p. 186).

Before this the narrator referred to her father as a scientist or a botanist. That he was "really" a surveyor is an entirely different thing; he was a technologist who put his knowledge and technique at the disposal of those who acted against the wilderness in the name of progress. The narrator has refused for all these years to acknowledge her father's true identity and her own identity as daughter of such a man.

3.6 Hatred of technology, especially new technology, and civilization based on technology is deeply ingrained in the narrator's personality. She suffers from nostalgia for past technologies and an older environment, the wilderness of her youth. The heron serves as a symbol of the gratuitous destruction of this wilderness.

Perhaps the father, by the end of his life, knew how wrong his job had been, to what destructive ends his knowledge of the wilderness had been put, but as a young man who believed in improving nature these ends would not have been self-evident.[11] In fact, "improvements" may have been a word without ironic overtones for him; for instance, strong motors on the boats and a good road from the village could be seen as positive technologies if his sick children had to be taken to a doctor. However, in spite of positive aspects of technology, which undeniably do exist, the narrator in her extreme romantic reaction against reason and technology sees only the negative aspects. Because of freeways and faster cars, one can get away from the city and into the country much faster, but it seems that there is less country to get to.[12] One travels through the countryside rather than being in the country, and the effect on the traveller is no more profound than watching rural scenes on TV: "I watch the side windows as though it's a T.V. screen," the narrator says (p. 11).

The narrator's identity seems to be caught up in memories of the landscape of her childhood. The North-country has become a place to visit rather than a place to live in--a result of the new, straight, paved road which encourages speed. The old dirt road respected the landscape; it was "full of bumps and potholes, it followed the way the land went" (p. 14). Even before she left the area, the picturesque covered bridge had been torn down to make way for a concrete bridge and a dam, which had been necessary to raise the level of the lake to float logs. Now little logging is done, and the area serves tourists who "play at fishing" (p. 17). Paul's cow has been replaced by the milkbottle and his horses by cars, and his wife has an electric stove. The narrator is rather patronizing in her attitude to them: "I felt betrayed, she should have remained loyal to her wood range" and yet mentally criticizes Paul and his wife for not keeping up with the times in regard to their appearance: "I'm annoyed with them for looking so much like carvings, the habitant kind they sell in tourist handicraft shops" (p. 20). She can't make up her mind whether technological improvements are for the peasants or not! Her emotional allegiance seems to belong to past technology, and such nostalgia for an older environment makes her an adherent of pastoral ideology.

Except for Paul's garden, people live in the country but not off the land: "no one keeps hens or cows or pigs anymore, it's all imported from more fertile districts. The bread is in wax paper wrappers, tranché" (p. 26). In the narrator's opinion roads, cars, and tourists are destroying the country: "Summer cottages beginning to sprout here, they spread like measles, it must be the paved road" (p. 30). Seaplanes are used to fly tourists to the lakes where they fish with power boats and dragnets. The boats leave a film of gasoline on the lake, and the sound of the motors disturbs the fish. The lakes are becoming fished out, and the tourists want access to lakes further north. The narrator notices that there is now a bar in the village which has a fake marble counter supported by a carved fish and a picture on the wall, a

> blown-up photograph of a stream with trees and rapids and a man fishing. It's an imitation of other places, more southern ones, which are themselves imitations, the original someone's distorted memory of a nineteenth century English gentleman's shooting lodge. (p. 27)

Pastoralism often depends upon an imitation of someone's distorted memory of a place or a past time; and the narrator momentarily reminds herself, in the midst of condemning the city and lamenting the changes she sees in the country, that the horrors of the city are matched by the fears of the wilderness (p. 73).

The narrator's negative attitude toward technology seems to be of long standing, from the time she moved to the city as a child:

> Flush toilets and vacuum cleaners, they roared and made things vanish, at that time I was afraid there was a machine that could make people vanish like that too, go nowhere, like a camera that could steal not only your soul but your body also. Levers and buttons, triggers, the machines sent them up as roots sent up flowers; tiny circles and oblongs, logic become visible, you couldn't tell in advance what would happen if you pressed them. (pp. 117-18)

By rights, however, if the system of machines is logical, then one should be able to tell the results after having pressed the levers and buttons once. The narrator's simplistic anti-technological position is most evident in her attitude toward fishing: "If we dived for them and used our teeth to catch them, fighting on their own grounds, that would be fair, but hooks were substitutes and air wasn't their place" (p. 126). Man with no technological aids wouldn't survive long, and man from earliest times has known this and made simple "machines" to help him, to extend his feeble power. Man is a tool-maker, and this is one characteristic that distinguishes him from other animals. The narrator does not drive a car and hates having her picture taken; to her the car is a "lumbering monster" and the camera is a "bazooka or a strange instrument of torture" (p. 8, p. 136). She objects to the birth control pill because it makes a woman "a chemical slot machine" and condemns people who want "love without fear, sex without risk, that's what they wanted to be true" (p. 80). She seems to believe that it's not enough to have emotional fears and risks in relationships between men and women--they must be physical too--and seems to share Mailer's view that an "element of chance" makes love and sex better. Also, in a simple-minded, romantic way she refuses to see that interference with conception is necessary as long as there are the numerous methods of interference with death that modern medicine provides. However, to her credit, she does sympathize with her mother who doesn't want to be put in a hospital and have her life (one should really say, her death) prolonged by artificial means. Still, the narrator ignores the dozens of times between birth and death that a person needs medical (that is, chemical, surgical, etc.) interference and is grateful for it.

Of course, if we accept her general philosophy that the best approach to nature is to "leave no traces" anywhere, then civilization as we know it would not be possible--neither the evils nor the benefits of our largely urban civilization would exist (p. 129). This is not to say that the narrator is wrong in her condemnation of the ills that excessive reliance on reason and technology has caused. If civilization is measured by the amount of garbage one leaves or the amount of territory one covers at the fastest possible speed, then civilization is to be condemned. Unfortunately, this is as far as the narrator gets; and because the novel is so one-sided and persuasive, it is easy for the reader to agree and condemn technology as vehemently as she does and long for the "good old days."

Most effective as a symbol of gratuitous destruction of the wilderness by rational, technological man is the dead heron hung upside down by a nylon rope. Since herons are not edible, the killers of the bird must have killed it simply to prove that "they had the power to kill" (p. 116). According to the narrator, people relate to nature in three ways: as "food, slave or corpse" (p. 116). The dead heron fills the third category. At first she blames its death on "the Americans," "the friendly metal killers," but then feels "a sickening complicity" in the deed (p. 117, p. 130). Because she never said anything or tried to stop them, she compares herself to the silent Germans who didn't protest Hitler's evil. Perhaps, also, she would class herself among the people who accepted the crucifixion of Christ without a word of protest. At first she thinks that human evil has martyred the bird who hangs there "desecrated, unredeemed," but later it occurs to her that by its death it has become a creature of redemption itself, an upside-down Christ: "anything that suffers and dies instead of us is Christ; if they didn't kill birds and fish they would have killed us. The animals die that we may live" (p. 130, p. 140). Animals serve as scapegoats or victims of human aggressive impulses, and, of course, as food. The narrator suggests that we need to kill to have food--both animals and plants--but that we should kill and eat with reverence and thanks: "But we refuse to worship; the body worships with blood and muscle but the thing in the knob head will not . . . it consumes but does not give thanks" (p. 140).[13] The redemptive aspect of the heron comes to mind when she sees an airplane one morning while she is thinking about her own past acts of cruelty.

The plane is a machine "threading the cities together with its trail of smoke; an X in the sky, unscarred crucifix," the same shape as a flying heron, a "bluegrey cross" (p. 140). The airplane can bring destruction; unscarred itself, it can cause wounds and scars; but more likely, since it is a machine, the narrator can associate no redemptive qualities with it. Although it is cross-shaped, it has essentially nothing to do with human suffering, unlike the heron which is both the cross and the Christ-figure. The heron has all the marks of the crucifixion--the scars and blood serve to redeem man's evil. The airplane, having never lived and suffered itself, cannot die and thus cannot redeem anyone.

3.7 Those people who have killed the heron and destroyed the wilderness are labelled "American" by the narrator. They embody for her all that is evil in technological civilization and all that she wants to deny in herself. David is an example of an "American," and his marriage to Anna shows how destructive of identity a relationship with such a person can be.

That the narrator blames "the Americans," a kind of people she doesn't identify with, for the death and desecration of the heron is important. She sees the influx of Americans into the Canadian wilderness in terms of a creeping disease or as an invasion of machine-like creatures. Her hatred of U.S. imperialism predates her return visit to the wilderness where she grew up as a child. It is evident, in disguised form, in the first sentence of the novel: "the white birches are dying, the disease is spreading up from the south" (p. 7). Later when she is at her father's cabin, she thinks, "the disease hasn't yet hit this part of the country," but it will (p. 36). The end, she feels, is inevitable: on White Birch Lake "the white birch grew in clumps by the shore edge, doomed eventually by the disease, tree cancer, but not yet" (p. 117). The nearness of the danger is clear when Malmstrom from the Wildlife Protection Association of America offers to buy the narrator's island (hers to sell if her father is dead) because their place on Lake Erie is "giving out" (p. 94). They are not concerned with protecting nature; they have killed their own lakes and now want Canadian lakes where members can hunt and fish and "observe . . . the beauties of Nature" (p. 94). Their attitude toward nature is far from the narrator's belief that to "leave no trace" is best. They would need to put in a power generator and a septic tank before they could fully appreciate the "rural charm" of the island (p. 95). Their wilderness retreat would probably resemble the nuclear installation at La Macaza which "looks like an innocent hill, spruce-covered, but the thick power lines running into the forest give it away" (p. 9). The narrator wants nothing to do with such people.

When the Americans are described in animal terms, the words "dog" and "shark" are used, but usually they are compared to machines and are associated with destruction. "They're the kind who catch more than they can eat and they'd do it with dynamite if they could get away with it," the narrator thinks to herself when her party encounters two Americans fishing (p. 66). She gets to feel paranoid during their stay at White Birch Lake and is sure that there are Americans in the tent she can see at the end of the lake. They are watching her from their "bunker": "Binoculars trained on me, I could feel the eye rays, cross of the rifle sight on my forehead" (p. 118). Next day they seem to her to be Martians: "Raygun fishing rods, faces impermeable as space-suit helmets, sniper eyes . . . guilt glittered on them like tinfoil" (p. 121). She continues to condemn them for killing the heron:

> That was their armour, bland ignorance, heads empty as weather balloons . . . straight power, they mainlined it; I imagined the surge of electricity, nerve juice, as they hit it, brought

> it down, flapping like a crippled plane. The innocents get slaughtered because they exist, I thought, there is nothing inside the happy killers to restrain them, no conscience or piety; for them the only things worthy of life were human, their own kind of human, framed in the proper clothes and gimmicks, laminated. (pp. 127-28)

The two "Americans" turn out to be from Sarnia and Toronto, and they in turn thought the four people in the narrator's group were the Yanks. The narrator is furious because the two men had "disguised themselves," but in fact they are no more disguised than the other group (p. 128). Evidently the two groups have a similar identity.

At this point the narrator begins to generalize and make connections: it's not what country one comes from that's important--it's the values one has. These two Canadians are "American" because they have the values of that country:

> they'd killed the heron anyway. . . . they're still Americans, they're what's in store for us, what we are turning into. They spread themselves like a virus, they get into the brain and take over the cells . . . Like . . . creatures from outer space, body snatchers injecting themselves into you dispossessing your brain, their eyes blank eggshells behind the dark glasses. If you look like them and talk like them and think like them then you are them, I was saying, you speak their language, a language is everything you do. (p. 129)

Americanism is a disease, a system of values that destroy, another name for evil. After making these connections, the narrator admits (one of the few times that she does) that she is one of the evil ones: "How did we get bad," she asks (p. 129). In her search for an identity she has found one that she doesn't like. Later when she is accused of hating men, however, she thinks of herself as the exception, the good outsider:

> it wasn't the men I hated, it was the Americans, the human beings, men and women both. They'd had their chance but they had turned against the gods, and it was time for me to choose sides. I wanted there to be a machine that could make them vanish, a button I could press that would evaporate them without disturbing anything else, that way there would be more room for the animals, they would be rescued. (p. 154)

By "Americans" she means all North Americans, and, by implication, all people who have been influenced by western civilization whose essence is exploitation of nature for the benefit of man. But her imaginary "rescue" of the animals by using an evaporating-machine is very "American," and she is not aware of this discrepancy in her thoughts. She is not willing to admit that she is as bad as everyone else.

What the narrator means by "American" on a more personal rather than purely political level is evident in how she sees David: "Second-hand American was spreading over him in patches, like mange or lichen" (p. 152). "There's something missing in him," and he is unable to love Anna or to accept her love for him (p. 122). For David, sex is a means of revenge and retaliation against Anna; the narrator comments that "it would be enough for him if our genitals could be detached like two kitchen appliances and copulate in mid-air, that would complete his equation" (p. 152). To the narrator he seems to be a robot with his wristwatch serving as a switch to turn him on and off. Perhaps one can even go so far as to connect his "Americanism," his anti-human mechanical nature, with the science and reason of the narrator's father because at one point she sees that David's "eyes gleamed like test-tubes" (p. 152). That is his identity: technological man. He was once a radio announcer and now teaches Communications even though his own form of communication is borrowed slang and cliché. His idea of reality has been conditioned by the media: "he thinks this is reality: a marginal economy and grizzled elderly men, it's straight out of Depression photo essays," his wife comments (p. 30). His ideas are "trendy": he says the country is better than the city and thinks about starting a commune on the island, but he doesn't know how to bait a hook or kill a fish and couldn't possibly survive in the wilderness alone. He would consider a stuffed fish or a deer head over the mantel an example of clichéd middle-class vulgarity, but his shots of fish guts rearranged to form "better angles" are simply a new cliché (p. 69): his movie of "Random Samples" is not essentially different from a stuffed fish, only the technology is new and more sophisticated. His opinions about Yanks and capitalists seem to come out of his mouth automatically; in a time when Canadian nationalism is becoming "trendy," David says the expected words. He may mean what he says, but because "a language is everything you do," his actions in general undercut his words and make them sound insincere--and "American."

Being married to such a man has cost Anna a great deal: her identity. Anna's and David's marriage seems to be an example of true "emotional commitment," the narrator thinks at first, but then finds out it is no more than a continual power play between two relatively empty people, a kind of sado-masochistic construct, a kind of performance put on for an unknowing audience (p. 47). Living with David for nine years has made Anna's "artificial face . . . the natural one" (p. 43). Because David puts a high premium on youthfulness, Anna doesn't dare be seen without her mask of makeup. Her makeup is a visual metaphor for her divided self, her "neck dividing body colour from applied face colour" (p. 105). In her gilt compact resides "her other self," her "soul," her perfect or Platonic self which is a "folded imitation of a magazine picture that is itself an imitation of a woman who is also an imitation, the original nowhere . . . captive princess in someone's head" (p. 165). Whether the head is David's or Hugh Hefner's doesn't matter. Because she is not a real person, sex for her is a mechanical act, the narrator supposes: "she copulates under strobe lights with the man's torso while his brain watches from its glassed-in control cubicle at the other end of the room, her face twists into poses of exultation and total abandonment, that is all" (p. 165). Like most of her contemporaries, she is "split into parts" (p. 134). She loves David, but probably because of the nature of her relationship with him, she has lost her identity as a person. To the narrator, Anna is half-dead: "she has crystallized. The machine is gradual, it takes a little of you at a time, it leaves the shell" (p. 165). As the narrator retreats into being an animal, she judges the others: "they are all Americans now" (p. 169). Everyone except herself, that is.

3.8 The images of the frog and the fetus provide a focus for the narrator's chosen identity as powerless victim. Related to this desire for powerlessness is her close identification with a past environment that she sees as victimized by new technology and her severe case of nostalgia for childhood, a time of life when one is free from responsibility.

On an even more personal, non-political, level the narrator's hatred of machines and the whole world of reason is crystallized in her abortion. This event in her life, one that she wants to take no responsibility for, solidifies her identity as an innocent, powerless, technology-hating victim. Even at the moment she is trying to become pregnant again she fears that "they will do that to me again, strap me to the death machine, emptiness machine, legs in the metal framework, secret knives. This time I won't let them" (p. 162). In fact, she has already admitted that she had a back-street abortion--not in a hospital and not in any sort of machine. She must realize that the "death machine" is the same as the "birth machine" because in her animal madness she is determined that she will have her baby by herself in the forest like a cat (p. 162). What she is doing is inventing her victimization by a nefarious "they" and connecting them with powerful, hated machines to make her powerlessness and lack of responsibility for the act complete. Or, as an alternate version, "they" have succeeded by the operation in making her like them; her identity, thus, consists of being "cut in two," "nothing but a head" (p. 108). Here she is talking of her schooling, but in her anti-intellectualism she connects the gradual desensitizing of education with the sudden death of feeling that the abortion produced in her.

One of the most vivid images in the novel is the tadpole or frog in a jar. In her mind the frogs trapped and dying in jars seem to be associated with "an unborn baby . . . [who] can look out through the walls of the mother's stomach, like a frog in a jar" (p. 32). For her, frogs are connected with dissection in high school biology where they died a martyr's death in the cause of science (p. 120). They are connected, too, in her early experience of passivity in the face of evil when she became an accomplice in her brother's cruelty to animals. Except for one instance, her rescue of those animals was imaginary, and her acceptance of guilt is infrequent. So is it with her abortion:

> it was in a bottle curled up, staring out at me like a cat pickled; it had huge jelly eyes and fins instead of hands, fish gills, I couldn't let it out, it was dead already, it had drowned in air. It was there when I woke up, suspended in the air above me like a chalice, an evil grail. (p. 143)

This is not a memory of an actual event but an image invented to disguise reality and express her hatred of science and reason. "I stretched my hand up to it and it vanished. The bottle had been logical, pure logic, remnant of the trapped and decaying animals, secreted by my head, enclosure, something to keep the death away from me" (p. 143). She had tried to rescue her brother's specimens once and would like to think that she tried to save the fetus. However, she does admit her responsibility here: "I killed it. It wasn't a child but it could have been one, I didn't allow it;" but then retreats from this avowal: "it was enough reality for ever, I couldn't accept it, that mutilation, ruin I'd made, I needed a different version" (p. 143). She blames "them" again: "I was emptied, amputated . . . they had planted death in me like a seed" (p. 144). Very seldom does she admit that she could have said "no." Sometimes she feels as though she were the one in a bottle looking out through the distorting glass walls: "everything had been glancing off me, it was like being in a vase . . . Bottles distort for the observer too: frogs in the jam jar stretched wide, to them watching I must have appeared grotesque" (p. 106). As reparation for the frogs she didn't rescue from her brother, she lets out of the bottle those she has brought as fish bait for David; and to make up for her previous lack of concern for Anna, she throws "Random Samples" into the lake:

> I unwind the film, standing full in the sun, and let it spiral into the lake. . . . the invisible captured images are swimming away into the lake like tadpoles . . . hundreds of tiny naked Annas no longer bottled and shelved. . . . everything has escaped. (pp. 166-67)

This "release" doesn't seem to make any difference to Anna, but the act serves as another example of the narrator's hatred of technology and her belief in the cleansing, redemptive power of nature--a common combination in romantic pastoralism.

In attempting to create for herself the identity of a "good" person, her rebellion against technology and reason takes two forms--nostalgia for childhood (to an extreme degree) and anti-intellectualism (again to the most extreme degree possible). She longs to recapture her childhood even though she doesn't find the way of life her father built for his family viable for her. She has made a mess of her life in the city; and her search for her father in the wilderness is more importantly a search for answers, for a way that she can understand herself and live her life. At one point she says that "if you tell your children God doesn't exist they will be forced to believe you are the god, but what happens when they find out you are human after all, you have to grow old and die?" (p. 104). This seems to be what happened to the narrator: she has made her parents into gods of a kind. Her parents, perhaps, made a mistake in letting her think that they knew all the answers; now with them gone she must look elsewhere. It takes her to the end of the novel to realize this, but in the meantime she keeps hoping that they have left her "answers" that will end her search for an identity.

Even at the beginning the narrator is suffering a severe case of nostalgia for her lost childhood. At one point she resents her parents for getting old and wishes they had died when they were young so she could remember them "unchanged." She wants everything to be the same as it was when she was a child, her parents frozen in time:

> I could leave and return much later and everything would be the same. I thought of them as living in some other time, going about their own concerns closed safe behind a wall as translucent as jello, mammoths frozen in a glacier. All I would have to do was come back when I was ready but I kept putting it off. (p. 9)

Even though her desire for permanence is a universal one, she has no right to expect such a thing of her parents; she has no right to lock her parents into an imaginary garden even more artificial than the one they have created for themselves. The loss of childhood is especially evident to her when she sees the changes in technologies that have taken place during her absence. She wants Paul's wife to have the same old wood stove rather than a new electric one, and when she sees that a new road has replaced the old one and brought tourists into the wilderness, she is extremely upset: "Nothing is the same, I don't know the way any more. . . . he shouldn't have allowed them to do it, I want to turn around and go back to the city and never find out what happened to him" (p. 12). She hysterically blames her father for the changes she sees--and we find out later that he, in fact, was largely responsible for these changes. She would rather not face up to the inescapable unpleasantness of life: change, age and death. Her nostalgia is so extreme that it appears crazy. For instance, when she's not carsick on this trip as she frequently was as a child, she feels cheated: "the first view of the lake . . . blue and cool as redemption, should be through tears and a haze of vomit" (p. 15). This suggests that the narrator believes that suffering must precede redemption, that if she suffers now in the same way as she did when she was a child, somehow she can regain the good that she associates with childhood. In the village she waits "for the nostalgia to hit," but it can be seen that her whole present life is filled with nostalgia for the past (p. 18). The expected moment of nostalgia does occur, however, when she is at some distance from the village:

> At the right moment I look over my shoulder as I always did and there is the village, suddenly distanced and clear, the houses receding and grouping, the white church startling against the dark of the trees. The feeling I expected before but failed to have comes now, homesickness, for a place where I never lived, I'm far enough away. (p. 30)

This is the essence of pastoralism--a longing for a time or place that never really existed for her, or else an actual time and place glorified by selective memory. Later she recognizes the danger of false memories:

> I have to be more careful about my memories, I have to be sure they're my own and not the memories of other people telling me what I felt, how I acted, what I said: if the events are wrong the feelings I remember about them will be wrong too, I'll start inventing them and there will be no way of correcting it. (p. 73)

Through the use of false memories she has made her childhood an escape, but gradually as she remembers what she and her brother had done as children that retreat from reality is closed to her. For two-thirds of the book she has been seeking her identity as a "good" person in childhood but finally must admit that it's not there. A child is no better than a barbarian, and she was no exception:

> It wasn't the city that was wrong, the inquisitors in the schoolyard, we weren't better than they were; we just had different victims. To become like a little child again, a barbarian, a vandal: it was in us too, it was innate. A thing closed in my head, hand, synapse, cutting off my escape: that was the wrong way, the entrance, redemption was elsewhere, I must have overlooked it. (p. 132)

Perhaps that is what her mother's legacy, a picture the narrator drew when she was a child and her mother saved for her, is all about--a means of cutting off the escape into childhood and putting a stop to her desire to be as protected and irresponsible as a baby in the womb.[14] In the crayon drawing

> was a woman with a round moon stomach: the baby was sitting up inside her gazing out. Opposite her was a man with horns on his head like cow horns and a barbed tail. . . . The baby was myself before I was born, the man was God . . . if the Devil was allowed a tail and horns, God needed them also, they were advantages. (p. 158)

After nine months the baby must come out of the womb and be confronted with the dangers of living in the world--without the aid of supernatural devices such as horns and a barbed tail but perhaps with the help of whatever "advantages" (possibly technologies of various kinds) it can find in being a human creature. It seems, however, that the narrator has never regarded an identity as an autonomous mature person as preferable to an identity as a baby in the womb.

The narrator is much like Peter or Duncan in The Edible Woman in her desire for simplicity and her retreat from the frustrating complexities of life. "Being a person is . . . too complicated" for her, and she would like to be a child again. One of her first memories is a trip home from the village in thick fog and the remarkable calmness of her parents in the face of danger: "what stayed in my head was only the mist whiteness, the hush of moving water and the rocking motion, total safety" (pp. 17-18). This feeling of "total safety" is possible only in very early childhood, in the womb above all, and in death. From this desire for "total safety," which is provided by someone else, develops her aversion to taking responsibility for her own life, and this attitude is embodied in her vision of the ideal way to live: "I felt that would be the best way to live, in a floating house carrying everything you needed with you and some other people you liked: when you wanted to move somewhere else it would be easy" (p. 40). She doesn't realize at all that this "perfect way" with a "house unmoored and floating like a boat, rocking and rocking," self-sufficient and cut off from people, is another version of her father's garden retreat in the wilderness--a way of life that she thinks she has totally rejected (p. 119, p. 174).

3.9 Madness is another form of escape from adult responsibility; but because of her experience with madness, the narrator may become sane and may be able to choose not to continue seeing herself as a powerless victim and hater of technology.

Along with the romantic idea that the child is in a favoured position closer to nature goes the notion that the mad person, divorced as he or she is from reason, is also somehow closer to the truth--a truth that is, by definition, nonrational. In Surfacing the desired escape into a protected childhood might be cut off for the narrator, but the escape into madness remains open.[15] For her, madness takes the form of an attempt to become an animal in the wilderness without the aid of anything from the "civilized" world. This extreme anti-intellectualism is closely related to her desire to return to being a child, even to being an unborn child. It becomes evident at first in her antagonism toward language. Very early she says, "To be deaf and dumb would be easier"--and to be an animal might be best of all (p. 11). Later she says that if she has a child she will never teach it any words (p. 162). "Language divides us into fragments," and her desire is to become an integrated, whole person again (p. 146).[16] As she looks at the plants in the forest, she finds "the names of things fading but their forms and uses remaining, the animals learned what to eat without nouns" (p. 150). "The animals have no need for speech" (p. 181). People have found, however, that words are necessary to communicate to others knowledge gained through experience. This is one advantage people have over animals although, as the narrator observes, "animals don't lie" (p. 153). Along with the benefits of being human come the evils, and this is something she doesn't want to accept. Unlike her father who valued only the Houyhnhnm qualities in mankind, she has come to see only the Yahoo qualities as good.

Before she can learn "not only how to see but how to act," she feels that she, like Jeremy Sadness, must undergo a "transformation," an immersion "in the other language"--that is, in the non-verbal language of animals (p. 153, p. 158). With no concern for Joe's individuality or for the fate of the child, her first act is to try deliberately to conceive another child.[17] Sex this time is not "educated, crisp as a typewriter" or "intricate as a computer"; this time it is not for pleasure: "pleasure is redundant, the animals don't have pleasure" (p. 68, p. 161).

Thinking that she has divested herself of reason, a quality animals do not share with people, she does not have to consider the irresponsibility of her act. Still, her reasoning power is not dead; it becomes a servant to her emotions and makes false connections: "I can feel my lost child surfacing within me, forgiving me, rising from the lake where it has been prisoned for so long" (pp. 161-62). She doesn't realize that making another child does nothing to redeem her abortion--nothing can cancel that act--and never considers the possibility that giving birth is not necessarily a good and responsible act. Also, only she can "forgive" herself. In this as in other things, she wants someone else to provide "the answer." Even at the end she makes a false assumption of a similar kind: "It might be the first one, the first true human; it must be born, allowed" (p. 191). Much more likely is the possibility that this child (if there is one) will be as evil as any other (she is still "not prepared for the average"); it is very unlikely that she will be the mother of a savior. In one of her more lucid moments she has observed that "saving the world, everyone wants to; men think they can do it with guns, women with their bodies, love conquers all, conquerors love all, mirages raised by words" (pp. 163-64). Perhaps she herself confuses what is real with what is a mirage, what is "good" with what is "natural." However, for artistic reasons it may be a very good idea for the narrator not to have learned all that she needs to know. Her not having learned all the lessons provides an open-ended ending to the novel, a human conclusion after which we suspect there will be as much backsliding as movement forward.

The reason that the narrator has chosen Joe to be the father of this "god" "with shining fur" is that he is the most unformed, animal-like "un-American" man available (p. 162). "He is thick, undefined, outline but no features," a man who can still feel love and pain: "For him truth might still be possible, what will preserve him is the absence of words; but the others are already turning to metal, skins galvanizing, heads congealing to brass knobs, components and intricate wires ripening inside" (p. 161, p. 159). Unlike David, Joe is not an imposter, not a machine pretending to be a human being. In fact, to the narrator he is no more than a male body: "Everything I value about him seems to be physical: the rest is either unknown, disagreeable or ridiculous" (p. 57). He is a kind of primitive man, a dying breed that should be preserved in a sanctuary; like the buffalo, he is "shaggy and blunt-snouted, with small clenched eyes and the defiant but insane look of a species once dominant, now threatened with extinction" (p. 8). He is a hairy man, somewhat like a teddy-bear, who makes "mutant" pots with his "peasant hands" (p. 57, p. 8). "Speech to him was a task," and the narrator considers this characteristic to be his redeeming feature (p. 77). At the end she says of Joe, "he isn't an American . . . he isn't anything, he is only half-formed, and for that reason I can trust him" (p. 192).

At one point the narrator imagines her father to have become mad or "bushed" from his solitary life in the wilderness and says, "madness is only an amplification of what you already are" (p. 101). We never know if this judgement as applied to the father is correct, but there is evidence that it is correct when applied to her. She is a romantic who attempts to retreat from the modern, urban, technological age she lives in, and her madness is an amplification of what she already is. After her three friends leave without her, she proclaims that "the truth is here," that is in the wilderness away from the "catacombs of the city" (p. 170,

p. 168). That "the truth" could exist just as well in downtown Toronto is an idea that a romantic would not consider. The narrator tries to become as much a wild animal as possible. She tries to "abolish" all those years that her parents, aided by social institutions such as the school, attempted to make her "civilized at last, the finished product" (p. 108). "I tried for all those years to be civilized," she says, "but I'm not and I'm through pretending" (p. 168). She equates civilization and reason and condemns both: "From any rational point of view I am absurd; but there are no longer any rational points of view" (p. 169). Certainly for her there are no longer any rational points of view. From a point where she considered herself a "severed head," she has now come to deny the mind completely to become all body.

She tries to get rid of everything tainted with civilization even though she finds herself feeling now and then at a loss without tools such as a screwdriver, axe, knife, hammer, and nails. She burns her work (illustrations for a book of fairy tales) and painting equipment and the wedding ring she received from her "non-husband"; and since "everything from history must be eliminated," she destroys her childhood drawings and her brother's, her father's maps and charts, her mother's photo album, and one page from each of the books in the cabin (p. 176). In all this falseness, she has to "clear a space" for "the truth" (p. 177). She smashes all the glass things in the cabin and slashes the clothes and bedding. She goes barefoot ("shoes are a barrier between touch and the earth"), wears a blanket "until the fur grows," and goes back to nature with a vengeance (p. 161, p. 177). The shelter and food of the cabin and the use of the outhouse are "forbidden." Garden vegetables are permitted at first, but when they too are "forbidden," she must gather roots and plants in the forest in the belief that "provisions, they will provide, they have always favoured survival" (p. 180). She expects that any people who come will "mistake [her] for a human being," but she feels that in her "true form" she is really a wild animal, a heron perhaps (p. 183). Her true identity, she believes, will be found in the non-human world.

This experience of madness seems necessary to the narrator in order for her to become sane: "crazy people can come back, from wherever they go to take refuge" (p. 103). Like Lear who, mad and naked in the storm, learns a "truth" and emerges on the other side of madness, the narrator of Surfacing goes through the last stages of madness in the forest as a preparation for her visions of her father and mother and for the possibility of sanity and reconciliation with life. Her parents can finally be dead for her once she has seen them and once she has dreamed about how they were when they were alive. (Up to this point she has been unable to dream.) "I know they have gone finally, back into the earth, the air, the water, wherever they were when I summoned them" (p. 188). The visions and the dream probably are indications that the unconscious levels of her mind have been reintegrated with the conscious levels, that reason and instinct can now reside together in her.

3.10 By the end of the novel the narrator may have found a new identity as a responsible adult who is able to return to an urban world full of troublesome new technologies and human relationships. Such an interpretation of the ending would emphasize the classical (and complex) aspects of pastoralism over the romantic (and simple) aspects.

In the last two chapters the narrator seems to have finally gained (not "regained," because her madness has started before the novel opens) her sanity, and she lists the important things she has learned and how different reality now seems to her. She remembers David and Anna without rancour and her "fake husband" with sorrow. She realizes that he wasn't what she thought him to be: "he was only a normal man, middle-aged, second-rate, selfish and kind in the average proportions" and that it was her fault for not being ready to accept "the average" (p. 189). The pragmatic takes over from the romantic when she admits that the food will run out and that she won't be able to stay in the wilderness in winter but must return to the city. On the political level she is no longer hysterical but perhaps has become too sanguine when she says that there is some hope that Canadians will not become "American" although "the pervasive menace . . . [does] exist, they're advancing, they must be dealt with, but possibly they can be watched and predicted and stopped without being copied" (p. 189). On a metaphysical level she recognizes that, once her madness has passed, no supernatural aid is at her disposal. The gods she had been in touch with are now "theoretical as Jesus," and she will "have to live in the usual way" without their help (p. 189). She realizes--and it is very important that she does--that "they give only one kind of truth" (p. 189). Perhaps the other kind of truth is available through the powers of reason; if so, she can combine the rational and the irrational in her life and stop seeing technology as wholly negative and herself as an innocent victim.

Also, she can reconcile herself to the memory of her father. She learns that there is "no total salvation, resurrection" and that praying to her father and mother and expecting them to provide "answers" won't work (p. [illegible]89). They never were more than human, as she had mistakenly thought. Now she sees them as they were and admits that "their totalitarian innocence was my own" (p. 190). She was the one guilty of destructive innocence, not they. Now she sees them in the way they must have really been:

> our father, islanding his life, protecting both us and himself, in the midst of war and in a poor country, the effort if must have taken to sustain his illusions of reason and benevolent order, and perhaps he didn't. Our mother . . . [suffering] pain and isolation and whatever it was she was fighting against. (p. 190)

Once the narrator can see what other people are really like, she can see what she is really like. She sees herself as "a creature neither animal nor human"--perhaps a combination of both--as "a natural woman" who is "a new kind of centrefold," she says with a sense of humour (p. 190). But probably the most important thing she learns is the true relationship between power and goodness. Early in the novel she says, "if I'd turned out like the others with power I would have been evil" (p. 37). She is equating power with evil and powerlessness with goodness; and, of course, technology increases power, and we have seen numerous examples of the resulting hatred and fear of technology that she feels. However, she now sees that her equation is false. Now she must "refuse to be a victim" and "give up the old belief that I am powerless and because of it nothing I can do will ever hurt anyone" (p. 191).[18] Belief in the goodness of such powerlessness and victimization is wrongheaded, irresponsible,and even dangerous. Once she admits that she isn't a powerless victim, "withdrawing is no longer possible" as a way of coping with life (p. 191). That's what she's always done, but presumably with all these new insights she will now stop.[19]

Her first act is to put on clothes again. Then comes the moment of decision with which the novel ends. She hides from Joe when she hears him coming to look for her again. Perhaps he's a "mediator" or perhaps a "spy"; perhaps he offers "captivity" or perhaps it's a "new freedom" (p. 192).

She's not sure. Both emotion and reason are operating in her at this moment. She admits for the first time that Joe matters to her--that she loves him. She realizes that their old type of relationship is "obsolete" now that she knows more about herself and other people. If she chooses to go with him, they will have to talk and that will mark a new beginning. The "intercession of words" is necessary to a new relationship between them, and yet there is a risk of failure in spite of good intentions. She doesn't know if the risk is worth taking or if she can depend on Joe. "To trust is to let go," she thinks; and we leave her teetering on the brink of decision (p. 192).[20] Her dilemma is made clear in the final sentence: as she hears Joe calling her, she notices that "the lake is quiet, the trees surround me, asking and giving nothing" (p. 192). Because nature is non-human, it doesn't fling "demands and questions" at her as Joe does. Once when he was asleep "demanding nothing," she felt that she could love him, but can she love him now when he does make demands? (p. 124). Can she moderate her romantic view of nature and technology, of emotion and reason, and come to terms with the complexities of urban life that will face her if she chooses to go back to the city with Joe? Also, can she forgive herself for being an "average" human being, a sometimes rational tool-using creature? Will she remember that her identity as victim was self-defined and that a new identity is hers to choose? Now that she has "surfaced," maybe she will learn to swim.[21]

There is no question that the narrator of Surfacing is a romantic and that her values and her attitudes toward life could be called pastoral. As we have seen, she identifies the wilderness landscape of her childhood, now being exploited and changed by new technology, as the pastoral landscape. She associates the technological horizon with the line separating the innocent, powerless child from the responsible, powerful adult; nature from technology; the non-rational from the rational; good from evil. Such a dichotomy of values fits the pattern of romantic pastoralism. Her antipathy toward new technology and her nostalgic idealizing of an older wilderness environment make her an ideal protagonist for a romantic pastoral.

However, probably Margaret Atwood herself does not advocate such a romantic pastoral ideology. She uses the device of a mad narrator to distance herself from her work and to put in doubt the ideology that her character espouses. And even if one could say that Atwood believes that madness and other experiences in the wilderness are essential to the discovery of a mature and responsible adult identity--a romantic idea--she does seem to suggest through the events in her novel that, although such experiences might be essential, they are not sufficient. After all, nowhere in The Edible Woman does Atwood question the fact that Marian will need to survive in a technological, urban environment without any escape into the wilderness to help her solve her problems. Furthermore, although the personal liberation of the narrator in Surfacing seems, on first reading, to depend entirely on her experience of madness in the wilderness, upon closer examination it is clear that her ultimate liberation or discovery of identity depends much more on her relation to people than to place. Her identity depends on how she will relate to Joe and other people if and when she leaves the wilderness.[22] If seen in this way, Surfacing resembles more the complex and classical model of pastoral where a return to civilization is at least implied rather than the simple and romantic model where the individual's relation with wild nature is what is important.[23]

CHAPTER IV

LEO SIMPSON

Leo Simpson is critical of technology, but the scope and manner of his criticism are somewhat different from those of Drew, Kroetsch, and Atwood. While Drew attacks the whole philosophical framework of western civilization and writes propaganda in favour of pastoral ideology, Simpson chooses to write satire that is aimed both at people who believe that new technology is man's salvation and at romantic pastoralists who favour a return to nature or a past environment as the answer to problems that they think are created or enhanced by new technology. Unlike Kroetsch and Atwood, Simpson does not favour the natural man over the technological man: especially in his story "The Savages" he examines both critically and decides that human nature, not new technology, is the source of human problems. His novels satirize (and satire may be a technique of acceptance) the process by which new technology converts an older environment into pastoral art. In The Peacock Papers, for instance, the computer makes the eighteenth-century world of literacy via the printed word the object of nostalgia and a fit subject for pastoral art. Simpson is keenly aware of the technological horizon, and as a satirist he can deal critically and intelligently with aspects of both new technology and pastoralism without providing simple answers.

4.1 To recognize the existence of the technological horizon is not necessarily to insist that one must choose between new technology and an older environment with its attendant technologies. In Arkwright *Leo Simpson satirizes many aspects of our society, one of which is the considerable influence that TV has over our lives; and the computer and those people who believe that this and other technologies are a positive feature of our society bear the brunt of Simpson's satire. However, the people who have an irrational hatred of technology are also criticized.*

Leo Simpson is a moralist who is "willing to utilize the didactic possibilities of literature." In Arkwright he has "a vision of a fallen society based on a distorted system of values. . . . [and] create[s] modern parables about the capitalistic technocracy gone awry."[1] He ranges on both sides of the technological horizon tilting against any trendy notion; the technology that he satirizes is both old and new (that is, mechanistic and electronic), and he also aims his barbs at those people who put their faith in technology of any kind. In the tradition of satire faulty human values, not technology, are blamed for the mess in which people find themselves. Usually satire, like pastoral, sets up an opposition between two sets of values, and one is advocated at the expense of the other. In Arkwright the positive values, which could be called commonsense, seem not to exist at all in modern North American society; thus, perhaps by implication they reside in a world that is far away either in time or geography, a world for which Arkwright is looking. Such longings are pastoral even if that lost good place is not precisely associated with outmoded technology. However, Simpson does not give his protagonist unqualified support in his search since the desire to escape to a pastoral retreat is also satirized.

In this novel he satirizes many things: new religious cults, speedreading, self-improvement, romantic love, modern poetry, synthetic food, the influence of TV, but especially industrial development and the use of computers in business. His unheroic hero, Addison Arkwright, wants desperately to be a rational eighteenth-century man like the essayist after whom he is named, and his constant preoccupation is the thought of escape from the modern world, which is full of complexities that he can't handle, to Crete, where he imagines life will be simple and pleasant. The villain of the piece is Caspar Arkwright, Addison's uncle, an incredibly rich man who is the embodiment of "energy that functions without control."[2] He operates from an eighty-storey concrete building in Manhattan which is served by electronic circuits so that he never has to see or write to anyone. In his office are photos of his manufacturing plants belching smoke; they are lighted as though they were costly art (p. 29). Addison wants to escape from the kind of world that the Caspar Arkwrights have created; his uncle simply wants to make more money. The conflict between the two men provides the context for Simpson's satire.

In Arkwright Simpson has several humourous incidents associated with TV, but the implications of all of them are serious. For instance, early in his career Caspar bought a TV station and then decided he wanted to get rid of it quickly without gaining a profit on his investment. Instead of selling it, he decided to "kill" it by feeding the audience the worst programs he could find. However, business boomed. Then he ran only commercials and the people still watched. His next step was to allow only local programs, but this plan gained him 93% of the possible audience. It is clear that Caspar's methods were misdirected; when he switched to "high-quality" programs which consisted of readings from Herrick, Ovid, etc., he lost all his audience. The person most affected by this loss was Sig Caffrey, the program director of Caspar's station. He was a farmer's son who left the farm and worked for Caspar in the hope of reaching the big time in the TV world. After he left the farm, his father refused to speak to him, but "his mother continued to send letters with news of crop prices and the health of the stock, hoping to entice her son back to reality" (p. 242). When the TV station failed, Sig was forced to leave the city and go back to this "real" rural life.

Besides commenting on the "taste" of TV audiences and the lack of connection with reality that TV work can result in, Simpson points out the negative effect TV has on viewers. Although Addison is married to the beautiful Eleanor Davis, TV and movie star, they have been separated for eight years, and he enjoys the same relationship with her that everyone does: "The only perfect relationship with her was that enjoyed by everybody: admiration from a distance, an enchantment promising more on closer contact. Then never to have the closer contact" (pp. 40-41). It's not that TV stardom destroyed a once satisfactory relationship; it's more that Eleanor's desirable face and body are now available to Addison only as they are available to everyone else. Eleanor on TV is an icon rather than the living woman whom Addison loved; but, sadly, she is actually no more than her image. She is the image of female beauty and sex in the same way that John Wayne is the image of male confidence and proper soldierly behavior. Addison's friend, Walpole Wilson, is drafted into the Viet Nam war, and once he is there he notices that the soldiers behave like movie soldiers. He decides that "either the movies were exceptionally accurate or the men around me saw too many of them" (p. 205). He writes to Addison:

> I expected to witness bloodiness and bone where the metal and men intersected and not the clean TV deaths, but I didn't expect the mess of what actually happens . . . . Even now, out here, if somebody mentions the word [war] I get a picture of John Wayne handsomely stalking forward

> with his submachine gun, muddied and in great shape. . . . Never underestimate a cliché. (p. 206)

But there are no John Waynes to lead the soldiers, only the same ordinary people, the same people with the same "old adam" in them:

> The savage in us is loosed and fed here, Addison, that same old wily savage we've been trying to starve and suffocate since the sun first flickered to life. . . . I'm afraid he has been nourished by our fantasies while we thought he was a-dying. (p. 209)

TV has helped nourish fantasies and has not helped people at all in coping with evil in the world. The "good guy" in the white hat always comes out on top in movies, but in real life there is no easy way to distinguish the good from the bad and no way of knowing in advance who will win.

Besides the influence of TV programs, there are the harmful effects of TV commercials to be considered; here Simpson seems to think that reformers are on a pointless crusade. Master McGrath's mission is to blank out TV advertising: "I want to bring the message of silence to New York before I hang up my screwdriver," he says (p. 201). He is an extremist, a crusader against the pernicious effects of TV commercials on the mind. He goes with his "tools to fight swamping materialism . . . the soft thrilling words of the serpent offering the pleasures of earth" (p. 211). One of the funniest incidents in the novel occurs when McGrath goes to the Cunliffe home to put a special switch on the TV so that they can cut off the sound from their chairs when the commercials come on. One problem is that the obnoxious ten year-old Stanley knows all the words of the commercials and provides them when the TV is silenced. A bigger problem, however, is that everyone depends on commercials as filler; once they are silenced, the viewers find that they must fill the void with talk, and they have nothing to say.

At first Addison is a supporter of McGrath's crusade, but by the end of the novel after considerable success in installing his TV device, McGrath seems to have changed his mind about his mission. After a visit to a poet friend who does not need to turn off the commercials, whose mind is open to nonsense and yet unaffected by it, McGrath becomes unsure of himself. By this time Addison has come to doubt McGrath's sincerity and calls his mission a "dime rebellion," a "storm in a teacup," no more than a fashionable grievance (p. 413, p. 414). Addison sees McGrath's project as part of "a tradition of equably accepting idiocy from intelligent men" (p. 414). McGrath has decided to stop being "a crawly do-gooder" and now instead of risking less, he wants to risk more and do bold, risky things on a cosmic level. Placing switches on TVs to cut off the commercials is not a big enough social crusade for him; he plans to take up physics once more, a subject at which he did brilliantly at Cambridge, and construct "a far more complex device, to counteract the devices which are--let us say, ethically unsound" (pp. 416-17). He muses upon the creation of a governor to limit all objects to a speed of sixty miles per hour. Addison by now regards McGrath as a gentleman idealist with impossible fantasies and can see that such a device would be both good and bad. It would take days to cross the Atlantic by air, but cars wouldn't need such powerful and wasteful engines; no modern weapons from the smallest bullet to the largest missile would be possible, but people would suffer and die when ambulances could not travel faster than sixty miles per hour. Obviously, Simpson is satirizing the do-gooders who tilt against technological windmills. But it is important to note, too, that a wider view of technology is finally developing in Addison. It could be said to be merely beginning near the end of the novel, but in the context of the entire novel any decrease in his complete hatred of all technology is noteworthy.

Except for adding to the file he keeps of his uncle's villainies, Addison is unemployed. Even though he has inherited wealth and doesn't need to work in order to live, when he was younger he had wanted to work at something socially useful, and he remembers the time when he looked for a job. The sugar refining factory that he visited was like a hell with "sweating demons" tending the vats and the "press room, an up-to-date illustration of the Inferno" (p. 168, p. 169). These presses are described in detail, but what appalled Addison most is the appearance of one of the workers:

> The nearest man ran past him, mouth open and breathing hard, and dear God, thought Addison Arkwright, he's only a boy. Nineteen? Younger than Addison, his rib cage visible and a face drawn in agony; eyes widened by effort. There are four more levels below, sir, four more levels. There are four more levels. (p. 169)

Addison wondered: "Can I bear to connive at this?" (p. 170). The work was hot and horrible and hypnotically repetitive, and Addison saw that automation would deliver many of these workers from their work, but the manager, while conceding, pointed out that a new plant would then be necessary. Addison could not face taking a job in such a place and investigated a diaper service plant next. Here machines and chemicals did the job of washing and rinsing dirty diapers. The manager found his work completely futile (the clean diapers are always dirtied again) and sought to escape in working with wood in his basement shop. He was ecstatic when he heard that he was to be fired and could devote all his time to his hobby.

Although Simpson's criticisms of factory work are valid, the account of Addison's search for job gives the author a chance to satirize those people, whom Addison represents, who have an irrational antagonism toward mechanistic and electronic technology. In his wanderings from factory to factory in search of a job that isn't futile or trivial Addison discovered that he had "been infected by strong luddite tendencies" (p. 181). His prejudices, "the desperate, the primitive and unreasoning hatred," were released mainly by computing machines (p. 181). This antagonism toward technology was revealed in his encounter with Languin Sabeo, a luscious woman who was in customer research for a perfume business. As she talked about business her face became an ugly mask; and although she was smiling and polite to men, she reserved her warmth and sexuality for the computer in her office. Or, at any rate, this was how Addison viewed the situation:

> Addison lustfully eyed Mlle. Sabeo's superb thighs, and found himself cold. Sweet and splendid thighs, empty of feeling, as if owned by a creature from a far planet. . . . He saw . . . a computing machine in the corner, squatted darkly and facing the formerly beloved thighs of his spoiled angel. . . . Addison matched the machine's blue finish closer to the colour of Mlle. Sabeo's dress . . . now I see the connection. I knew I didn't need to watch Mlle. Sabeo sensuously fingering the control switches, or leaning her warm body against the computer's cold front . . . For Addison, the computer was then born as the scapegoat of prejudice, gathering all the unrelated sins of life into its recognizable frame . . . I have noticed the threat, the plot, none too soon--already one of them has taken a girl. . . . When they get legs they'll want to use our washrooms. (pp. 183-84)

Here we have the comic situation of a man jealous of a dark, squatting machine and philosophizing about the time when machines will have human body functions and will need washrooms. However, in this essentially comic situation Addison seems to make a confession with implications of which he is not aware; he admits that the computer is a scapegoat upon which he heaps the "sins of life," probably the sins of his own life. Computers and other forms of technology, electronic and otherwise, can easily be blamed for consequences that are really a human responsibility. As we have already seen, *Surfacing*, too, brings this matter of responsibility to the reader's attention.

Addison's millionaire uncle, Caspar, says that all businessmen are eager to have machines in their offices and factories because they believe that machines can do better work than people can. The key word here is "believe," and Caspar takes advantage of this belief and makes a fortune renting and selling computers. He knows that machines cost more than human workers and that machines aren't more efficient, but what attracts businessmen to machines is that they don't have that weakest human component, the emotions: "The Stern-Vac's grandmother never died, and it never wanted to discuss private problems, nor was it ambitious and fawning" (p. 187). If this is the case, a businessman who disliked coping with human emotions (and the implication is that they all do) can get rid of his human workers and replace them with computers. Simpson develops this idea into a comic situation. The computers that Caspar rents and sells are not really computers; each one is actually a man inside a metal casing. Only the presidents of the companies leasing Caspar's "computers" know what is inside, and they pay four times the man's salary for the *idea* of a computer in their offices. This is because they believe in machines: "They'll make every allowance for a machine . . . They'll accept limitations in a machine they wouldn't tolerate *for a second* in a human. They *prefer* machines" (p. 342). Of course the "machine" works at the same speed and makes the same mistakes as the man it replaced, but that doesn't matter: it's the idea that counts. What finally spoils Caspar's computer empire is what he calls "the old adam." Two cases come up: a computer in London, Ontario, seduces a secretary and leaves her "in an interesting condition," and one in San Francisco gets drunk and insults the boss at an office party (p. 340). These incidents reveal the man in the machine and mark the end of the "human computer." Later Caspar analyzes his failure: "*A machine doesn't have vices*. *Lechery and drunkenness are HUMAN VICES, that's where we went wrong*. *We had them pulling in the money nicely, yes nicely as machines, and then bang*. *WE LOST OUT TO THE OLD ADAM!*" (p. 344). Perhaps this is true in the use of any technological device: it's "the old adam" that spoils the project every time.

Another incident where the human element wins out is in the "proof" that Master McGrath is Timothy Elmtree. Such proof is necessary for Addison to spoil his uncle's plans to establish a "religion of failure" in Toronto. The Timothy Elmtree church is run by computer--for processing memberships, tracking down credit ratings, etc. When Addison comes to confront Caspar, he thinks of the computer as a dangerous animal and doesn't dare sit with his back turned to it: "The computer sprang to life with its monkey chatter, sending the reels into their enraging gyration which resembles no movement in nature and answers to no visible law. I was aware of my luddite resentments muttering" (p. 316). In "a ceremony of machines" this computer is used to find out if the odds are in favour of McGrath being Elmtree (p. 328). "Computer proof" is the only kind of proof that Caspar will accept: "Caspar would believe the machine. Because in men who were Caspar Arkwrights the respect for other men had perished at the very beginning yet, yet they needed a place to go for truth" (p. 329). The machine can give probability, not certainty, but probability is truth enough for Caspar. However, Addison can see that the doctor who examined McGrath lies about his findings. Thus, the statistics that come out of the computer are based on false information. It is clear that the doctor lies because he actually believes that McGrath is Elmtree, and his belief influences the "facts" that are fed into the machine-- another case of "the old adam" at work and of Simpson satirizing the so-called objectivity of machines.

4.2 Simpson suggests that the blame that is heaped upon new technology really should be redirected at human nature which is ultimately responsible for such evils as pollution. Addison Arkwright, like other people before him, wants to escape the complexities and the responsibilities of urban life and live on an island isolated from people. This desire to leave the technology and "mess" of civilization behind and turn (or return) to a simpler life in an older environment (all characteristics of simple pastoralism) is marked by irresponsibility and even by misanthropy.

"The old adam" (or what Walpole Wilson called the "old wily savage") is the irrational element in human nature. It affects man's relationship with other people, with technologies of various kinds--and with nature. While Addison is in a cabin on a lake, two men in a motorboat, one with a rifle, spoil Addison's beach and swimming place when they accidently drop an oil can into the lake. Addison meditates on the pollution caused by the oil: "The oil had subdued and conquered the water, having come from no womb of nature, and the act was, to Addison, simultaneously stirring and repulsive, a figurative expression of power and its balance in weakness" (p. 375). The two men suggest detergent to clean up the pollution and offer money as restitution, but they won't leave until Addison lies and says that he, too, has a motorboat and that the accident could have just as easily happened to him. Only when "a comradeship of guilt," the recognition of the existence of "the old adam" in everyone concerned, is established do they feel free to leave (p. 376).

This incident is important because it brings to Addison's mind "the dead, the murdered waters of Ste. Véronique's Matawaza Lake" and Caspar's "remorse" at the pollution he has caused (p. 377). Before Caspar and his people came, Ste. Véronique was a pleasant village in Québec, twenty miles from the nearest highway and eighty from the nearest city. It was so small and unimportant that it was "omitted from the gas station road maps" (p. 282). It was a really backward place: it had no motels, restaurants, movie houses, Kentucky chicken, or Coca Cola signs. Caspar happened upon the village when his Lear jet was forced down there because of mechanical failure. The minute he saw it, Caspar knew how to make money from the picturesque setting of the village. He could do this because, as Addison comments, Caspar "was always a Janus toward the ethics of moneymaking: he found it easy to forgive himself for violating principles in practice which he might stoutly defend in theory" (p. 285). Because "we can't stop progress," Caspar brought into Ste. Véronique bulldozers, concrete mixers, and giant trucks loaded with building material. Roads were built, and Caspar bought out the local paper so he could use it to convince the villagers to be "progressive," rather than "conservative," and vote for industrial expansion. Old houses were ripped up to make room for apartment buildings complete with Muzak in the elevators. A long, low, "turdish" gas factory was built in such a way as to separate the village from the river and leave an expanse of "ravaged earth" around it (p. 378). Twelve large pipes ran from the factory to sink their "snouts" in the river. Although Caspar promised that no pollutants would leave the factory, within a month dead fish were seen in the lake. To keep up appearances Caspar circulated memos about "keeping our own nest clean," but nothing was actually done to lessen the pollution (p. 380). Willowtrees and other vegetation along the shore shrivelled and died. Although the stench over the factory and village made the air unbreatheable, the "standard of living was rising" (p. 379). St. Véronique could now boast a new school, hospital, better roads, apartment buildings, good hotel and theatre--also a supermarket and a Kentucky fried chicken outlet! Prosperity gave birth to more prosperity, and soon the village attracted pulp and paper, soap, and textile industries.

> What so firmly drew much of the new industry was that Ste. Véronique, obviously, could not protest against violation. With her dead grey waters, her grey dusty landscape, her ever-present foetid smells, her prosperity, Ste. Véronique, in her role as a devastated old whore, beckoned to those whose practices were dubious and not everywhere welcomed. . . . Factories of unclean habits settled on Ste. Véronique like flies on a dung heap. (p. 381)

Later Caspar admitted to Addison that his Arkwright Gas factory produced nothing except the pollutants that were pumped into the lake. His real business in Ste. Véronique was real estate, not gas: "Our job was to increase the value of the location," he explained, "if you're selling industrial sites they must look like industrial sites, Addison, and not like a picture postcard from Killarney" (p. 383). "The old adam" strikes again--in the guise of greed this time: "We'll do anything for a buck, that's our basic fault" (p. 383). In a manner of speaking, Caspar "cleaned up in Ste. Véronique" but left it incredibly filthy and despoiled; and those in the village who were all for progress could see the horrors that Caspar thought essential concomitants of industrial growth (p. 387). People like Caspar can only pretend ignorance; their motives are clear and the consequences of their actions are obvious:

> Most of the consumer items we make our greatest sacrifices for . . . are inessential. Nobody stops to think ahead any more. . . . We'll destroy a pretty landscape to make a

> chemical coating for a stunson oblong. We'll poison our water to make more than we need of tempered thrites. We'll foul the air to manufacture umligot sprockets . . . But nobody objects. . . . We're shitting in our own nest! (p. 284)

Although this is Caspar speaking, it is probably Simpson's opinion as well. Caspar is not shifting the blame for pollution totally onto other people and denying his own part in it; he is saying that since we all live in one nest, we are all responsible for keeping it clean or for making it an unbearable mess. Still, he has not done his part in keeping it clean for himself and others.

Addison Arkwright, too, is not the type of person to take such responsibility upon himself. His main desire throughout the novel is to kidnap his daughter and flee to Crete. This desire for escape from urban North American life is realized when Addison does manage to rescue Jennifer from her summer camp for rich girls and take her along with Larry Washington, his first and thereafter idealized love, to a cabin on a lake north of Toronto. This two week period is his happiest time and provides the obligatory "sex and nature" encounter. Rural Canada as a whole is seen as positive: "The place sounds clean and pure. Everybody thinks of Canada as pine trees and snowy whiteness, and a bear or a wolf now and then. A clean and uncompromised place" (p. 3). But actually this is not Addison's ideal environment. Neither a garden nor a wilderness retreat is his ideal. Instead the island of Crete serves as his "place of escape and refuge," a place where he plans to take his daughter and save her from the corruption and evils of the world and act as a kind of modern-day Prospero to her Miranda. He wants to rescue her from her "good" boarding school, the life of sophistication and corruption that he sees in store for her if she is left in the custody of her actress mother and the vile agent, Henry Veeley. Addison has "great expectations of the pure island life; the girl growing like a straight sapling" (p. 81). He wants "to wave good-bye from the ship to the millions bleeding from the wounds of civilization. The people of Crete lived in villages, most of them, on the heights of the mountains" (p. 227). Althought Crete had once been the site of a great civilization, now it is the home of simple peasants, Addison thinks, who are morally superior because they live in a mountainous country. He wants to go and live with these people, or perhaps one should say he wants to live near them; there is no indication that he could be like them even if he wanted. Then, too, his image of them is extremely sentimental-- even in this pastoral setting a Cretan Henry Veeley, a kind of Caliban, could exist, but such a possibility never enters Addison's mind.

The man Addison admires above all is Larry's father who lives alone in the northern United States: "he's cut off in the northland, by his own hand, in the woods beside the stream, with no lines of contamination from the mess outside" (p. 99). He is indeed cut off from contamination, but he has cut the lines of communication as well. He spends his time making wine and growing vegetables in his garden. His dog is his only companion. Here is a true individual, Addison says; this man "prefers loneliness to self-delusion" (p. 101). His "life alone was all he needed," and his happiness depends on the absence of other people (p. 257). Really, it is difficult not to pity him because he has achieved his desire--complete separation from everyone. But his existence in the novel is essential to indicate how strong Addison's antipathy toward civilization and his desire to escape are.

The story of another "hermit" is inserted into the action of the novel for the same reason. Addison's Toronto mansion has an interesting history in regard to hermits. It was built by a man who also wanted to distance himself from people in the way that Mr. Washington and Addison do. Even before 1845 when the population of Toronto was 9,227, city development was considered to be a "cancerous spread" (p. 124). Henty, a misanthropic sailor with a large fortune, "wanted to balance the satisfaction of meeting as few people as possible against the inconvenience of living in a total wilderness" so he built the Roanoke estate well north of the city and yet only a short ride from the source of "fresh victuals and good claret" (p. 125). He chose a site "green, deserted, and beautiful," surrounded it by a fence, and installed iron gates which were locked and guarded by a man and two cannons (p. 125). However, Henty was soon surrounded by city development, and he was "trapped like a provoked beast within the enclosure of his estate" (p. 127). He had to leave it and escape northeast to another perfect spot where "the nearest taint of civilization was his supply centre, Bytown, within a convenient riding distance" (p. 128). We are not told what happened to him there, but it is possible that his second refuge was swallowed by an expanding Ottawa. It seems that such an extreme desire to escape from urban life is at least tinged with misanthropy. The term is used to describe Henty but could also be applied to Mr. Washington and Addison Arkwright, and to other advocates of pastoral ideology.[3]

By the end of the novel Addison realizes that it is wrong to put "exclusive blame" on Caspar, and people like him, for the state of North American civilization (p. 420). He sees that his private life leaves much to be desired and that "a lifetime of self-examination lay ahead," but he still chooses Crete, his island refuge, as the place where his self-examination can best be done (p. 419). Not for him are the skyscrapers and busy streets of the large North American cities. He flees these to begin a simple life in a stone cottage. He says,

> I can now stand with my naked feet on an earth where the consolations of buildings have been wiped out by efficient time. My sense is of the warmth in a future, feeling the grass. As a man, when our own consolations have been taken away, will I believe know the earth again in the meadows of New York, and the city above the lake when the concrete has been erased. . . . Here the buildings that lull the mind are long since gone, as a warning I can heed, and Cape Bejna is a beautiful harsh landscape that survived them. (p. 442)

His consolation, when he remembers New York and Toronto, is that in time they will crumble and disappear like the cities of ancient Crete, and nature will survive. He seems to see no value at all in urban life and puts all value in a pastoral life far from cities; but if Crete fell and was succeeded eventually by New York and Toronto, when these North American cities disappear, others in other places will surely be built. It is not likely that the future for many people will consist of "feeling the grass" with bare feet. But because of the negative features of living in cities, such a desire for a pastoral future is understandable just as nostalgia for a pastoral past is. However, to count on the rural scene to provide spiritual growth--"Cape Bejna . . . is, anyway, an appropriate birthplace of the world to see, in my need of greater spirit than my poor share, the up-to-date struggle of the next great Addison Arkwright reformation"--is futile and perhaps dangerous (p. 442). The need is unquestionably there, but nature might not be the source of fulfillment. Addison has often started on projects of self-improvement, and this trip to Crete might be simply another "beginning" in an endless series of beginnings. Simpson has shown us that all of Addison's past "reformations" have come to nothing, and the clue to yet another failure might be his inflated rhetoric and his excessively romantic view of the pastoral life.[4]

4.3 The Peacock Papers examines the conflict between technologies of the past (represented here by the printed word) and of the present (represented by the computer) and the consequences of that conflict on the life of the protagonist, Jeffrey Anchyr.

Arkwright closes with a view to the future, however sentimentally the hero regards that future. The Peacock Papers, a novel that deals with the conflict between technologies of the present and of the past, also ends with a view of the future but perhaps a less optimistic one. The technology of the present, in the form of electronic computers, wins the battle over the technology of the past, which takes the form of the printed word. This novel is a good example of pastoral literature that shows how a new technology changes an older environment and its technologies into an art form. Simpson seems to want us to take sides with Jeffrey Anchyr, who is nostalgic for the time when the printed word was respected, and against Harrison Royce, who favours computers over books.

The novel is a retrospective account of a new version of the battle between the "ancients and moderns," and the winner is known before the novel really begins. To anyone who loves books this adds to the poignancy of the defeat of the old technology. We know that the Bradfarrow Public Library is now called the Bradfarrow Municipal Data Centre; and since there is no use for a librarian in the electronic age, he is now called the Data Retrieval Assistant. Instead of books there are computer tapes. The computer machines are like inanimate monsters that eat the books, digest them, and reduce them to the "size of a pinhead."[5] But the book put on a computer tape is not really a book any longer even though the information may be the same. The method of reading, for instance, as well as the place of reading are different. Because machines are needed to help one read a tape or a microcard, reading is public much as it was in the time before the invention of moveable type and the mass production of books was made possible. No longer can one take a pocket book and read in bed, bath, or garden. The nostalgia in The Peacock Papers is for a time when books were valued and readers of books were regarded as civilized people. With the change in technology those who can "read" TV programs and computer tapes are regarded as civilized, advanced people. The Prologue and Epilogue of the novel consist of two people watching TV news and the Elmy Crunkle (probably Pierre Berton) Show. The two TV viewers still seem to read books; they are familiar with those Crunkle has written, for instance, but perhaps like most people now they depend mainly on TV for information and entertainment.

The guest on the Elmy Crunkle Show is Harrison Royce, the "media pundit," a satiric creation Simpson has modelled on Marshall McLuhan. Royce can neither read nor write, and he would be quite upset if someone called him "literate": "This is always a shock to the limited literate mind. The concept of illiteracy is actually a complementation myth created by specialist literacy . . . Lineal fragmentation is the assembly-line of the mind" (p. 7). At one time Royce needed secretaries to write down what he wanted to say in books and readers to read to him, but now with tape-recorders he is self-sufficient. With electronic technology the need to read and write never occurs, he says; but it seems somewhat contradictory that he puts out his own theories and opinions in book form for others to read. Crunkle wonders if he has trouble shopping in supermarkets, for instance, since he can't read the labels. Royce explains that he usually has no trouble because each package is "ideographic," but sometimes because the packages confuse medium and content, he buys spaghetti sauce when he thinks he is buying canned spaghetti (p. 8).

According to Royce "label ideographs in supermarkets are low-definition and cool. The produce section is hot. A tomato is pure information" (p. 8). Here Simpson is satirizing the language that McLuhan uses as well as his ideas.

To explain the new technology to "literate" people is difficult. People in Bradfarrow have demonstrated against the change from books to computer tapes. Their allegiance has been to print, and they don't want such a change imposed on them. Drastic things happen when a "new visual environment" is imposed on such people, Royce explains. A man whose allegiance has been to print is used to living his life "in sequential fragmented form instead of instantly" because reading the phonetic alphabet in clumps called words and sentences has instilled the habit (p. 220). If his mode of perception took the form of non-sequential "instants" or gestalt wholes, presumably his life would be different from what it is. It would be more like that of a primitive "pre-print" man or of a child who doesn't know how to read. However, because of the shock of being unable to cope with the new type of environment, which electronic technology has brought, the person conditioned to see things in "line-sequence" could go into shock or what Royce calls "lacunar amnesia" (p. 220). When a person suffers lacunar amnesia or future shock, his "instants" can become misplaced, lost, or misinterpreted. What happens, basically, is that the events in his life lose their expected sequence--much like shuffling a deck of photographs where each photo is part of an event in his life. The outward symptoms of lacunar amnesia, according to Royce, are a fall in blood pressure, slowing of heartbeat, and coldness of hands and feet. The afflicted person is like a duck flying upside-down: "He quacks up" (p. 221). This, in effect, is what happens to Jeffrey Anchyr, and the first chapter of The Peacock Papers is called "Cracking Up."

Simpson seems to want the reader to sympathize with the plight of the unfortunate hero of the novel, Jeffrey Anchyr. At age forty he is successful in the cattle feed business; he has a devoted wife, Cathy, and a beautiful home. However, in spite of appearing to have everything a man could want, Anchyr is miserable and ill. He looks older than his age, and people think he is sick or "on the bottle" or "cracking up." The first idea we get that something is seriously wrong with Anchyr is at a Friday meeting with his salesmen; he thinks, "I may not mind so much re-living Fridays from my past. The horror is in the inevitability, the preliving of next Friday" (p. 19). The suggestion is that this is what happens when one lives one's life in a series of seven-day sequences --one gets to be a prisoner of that sequential pattern. Anchyr feels that he has been dying for the last few months and finds that he seems to see only the bad in people (p. 50). In his misanthropy "every fair prospect suddenly has its snake," but he has no idea why he feels this way (p. 51).[6]

Anchyr is a man devoted to the printed word: he feels that "his humanity was defended by print" (p. 17). He is fond of works from the English Regency period and drama and philosophy of classical Greece. Sophocles is his favourite writer. However, because the pursuit of success in business is almost sacred in Bradfarrow, he reads only in the little spare time he has.

> In relation to this, his addiction to print was no more than an occasional withdrawal from reality, an act of curiosity and relaxation, and he was utterly isolated from any persuasion that reading a book might be a primary occupation in itself. He had developed no literary affections, because Bradfarrow would not tolerate them. (p. 84)

The men at work, for instance, "would guess Milton to be one of the Kraft cheeses," and Anchyr feels no bond with such people (p. 87). Outwardly he appears to be a typical businessman "except that the weed of his imagination had been allowed to flourish unmolested outside of office hours, feeding greenly on printed pages" (p. 41). Once Bunty Oakes has announced the end of the world to him, Anchyr feels free of time, and almost the first thing he does is go to the library. He no longer has to care about business success and can devote himself to reading books: "I can happily wallow in print for years," he says (p. 85).[7] He feels a new freedom "now that he had been demobilized as a slave of time" (p. 82). No longer a prisoner of sequential time, Anchyr says, "I'm wide open again. Everything I've ever learnt since I was two years old seems to be either wrong or unimportant. I have this feeling that I'm starting again from scratch, with a clean slate. I have a second chance to get it right" (p. 109). Like Arkwright, Jeffrey Anchyr feels ready for new beginnings.

The first strange event, the first incidence of lacunar amnesia, occurs when Anchyr is talking to his bookkeeper, Herbie, and notices that when he speaks there is no sound until a minute later when the words are actually heard. In a bar several hours later, a bit of the conversation Anchyr had with Herbie returns: "Somehow, a piece had been snipped from its proper place in the fabric of his life, leaving an empty minute, then neatly patched in again a few hours later" (p. 40). Only he hears the conversation; no one else in the bar does. Anchyr calls this strange mix-up in time the "Herbie effect"--named for his bookkeeper and, presumably, for Marshall McLuhan whose first name is Herbert. The name gives the reader a hint regarding Simpson's intentions to satirize

McLuhan's ideas about the effect of technology on human perception.

4.4 *Thomas Love Peacock, a nineteenth-century satirist, is a fitting defender of literacy (the old technology) against the computer (the new technology). At the root of his disagreement with Royce, the head of "the electricity gang," are their differing theories of human nature.*

As the chief antagonist to Harrison Royce and "the electricity gang" Simpson introduces Thomas Love Peacock, a satirist from the past, into his novel. Peacock wrote in the first half of the nineteenth century and worked for thirty-seven years in the East India House in London. As a former colonial administrator perhaps he will find scope for his talents in Canada; and as a writer devoted to the printed word, he is a fitting defender of literacy in the epic battle with Royce and his cohorts. For Peacock the enemy consists of "the barbarians . . . who would encompass the end of the world, and life as we know it" (p. 94). The end of the world seems to have coincided with the decision to make the library into a data centre; and looking at the two events from Peacock's point of view, this is only fitting. For him Hell is a place where poetry, fiction, philosophy, and music are not as he knew them in his lifetime and where huge public libraries don't have a single work by Demosthenes, for instance, in Greek for him to read. For these reasons an Ontario city in the early 1970s is a hellish place: "I find myself in a place where science has triumphed beyond dreams, to nightmares," Peacock says (p. 95). Very likely he is not against science for itself, but what he objects to is the decreasing importance of the arts and humanities. If science is not balanced by a healthy concern for arts and humanities, he would judge that a nightmare of technology would be the inevitable result.

At the dinner at Dogmatic Manor there is an "epic verbal battle" between Royce and Peacock which reveals the underlying implications of the library becoming a data centre (p. 126).[8] Peacock is "a man of vigorous prejudice" and argues his case very well against the ethos of our time (p. 128). Since only 5% of all library users read fiction and poetry, the Bradfarrow city council has decided that these people can buy their own books and not have their enjoyment of literature subsidized by taxes. Royce approves of the council's vote for change, for a system that is cheaper and more efficient:

> the resistance to slavish lineal coherency in fundamental democratic organisms is always encouraging. . . . [You are] rejecting clichés of perspective . . . and the discipline of serial thinking forced on us by the phonetic alphabet. (pp. 75-76)

Even though Royce has published books himself, one like a primer on typestyles and another where every second page is a magazine ad, he thinks that books are obsolete. He blames the strangest things on the phonetic alphabet: for instance, Mr. Tactor's need of the touch-and-feel philosophy (p. 130). And when the appallingly bad "Old Voyager, Canadian Sherry" is served at dinner he explains: "The label, of course, is the medium, and the wine is the message. The production of wine has become information-movement, and so the wine tastes as it does because of the phonetic alphabet " (p. 136). A third example is his explanation of the connection between pain and the phonetic alphabet:

> pain itself, unlike electricity, was a sequence, existing between the brain and the nervous extremities; and all sequences, or non-organic phenomena, are derivative of the movable-type machine, hence mankind's pain was traceable ultimately to the invention of the phonetic alphabet. (pp. 138-39)

It is impossible to believe that people did not suffer pain before the phonetic alphabet was invented; it would be as enlightening to say that because the pain people suffered was a kind of sequence of impulses, their perceptions were also sequential, and thus they invented an alphabet that was sequential and a machine that would print this alphabet.

Peacock, the second combatant in the debate between literacy and electricity, views the invention of the alphabet as one of mankind's greatest achievements:

> The phonetic alphabet has been mankind's only effective civilizing force, his only method of accumulating a wealth that is beyond the price of empire, the only transmitter of conscience from one age to the next. We are now asked to choose, instead, electronics, a system of infernal machines with so much ethical sensibility that it is man's most eager accomplice in his demented urge to destroy himself. (p. 144)

Peacock's belief in a civilization of literacy is evident here. It is of great importance that "conscience" (and by that he could mean moral teaching or even consciousness itself) be transmitted through the ages, that knowledge be accumulated for the enlightenment of future readers. However, he cannot see that knowledge and conscience can now be transmitted by means other than printed words in books. Film, records, tapes, etc., can also serve to transmit and accumulate whatever knowledge is valuable. Peacock's antipathy toward machines--in fact toward anything that is different from what he is used to--is part of the pastoral attitude which is voiced here as extreme conservatism.[9] He is so conservative, in fact, that he even objects to machines powered by steam. Also, his projection of evil onto inanimate machines (a practice commonly employed by writers of romantic pastorals) does not help matters at all. Machines are not "man's most eager accomplice"; they are simply tools that man has created to help him make life more comfortable, and if these tools help destroy mankind, they are not to blame. To expect machines to have any sort of "ethical sensibility" is naive in the extreme.

To long for a past age and a past technology will do no good, Royce thinks, and to pretend that there is even a choice between two systems of technology is misguided:

> There is no question of choice involved: rather, we are overwhelmed by a technology, and must live with it, independently of our sentiments and preferences. We are living now in the electric age, and no amount of sincere nostalgia will return us to an earlier one. We are carried along willy-nilly. (p. 144)

What the argument between Peacock and Royce comes down to at this point is their opposing views of human nature. Royce claims that in such matters as choosing one technology over another, people have no choice at all. What happens simply happens because change is inevitable. Peacock counters with the view that "man [is] a creature of soul and of noble strength, and not a piece of rudderless flotsam" that is at the mercy of the current of change (p. 144). In an argument of this type where both of these men seem to be right, it is difficult to take sides; but for anyone who cares for literature it is impossible not to be convinced by the rhetoric which Peacock unleashes in its defence. He will fight to the death against

> a race of non-literate savages, superstitious worshippers of gods they had constructed themselves, fact-drunk technicians, the visually oriented or picture-people who had progressed so far beyond inefficient words to field perception that they had regressed to kindergarten, men who were able to visit the moon but could not describe it except in amazed wows and grunts . . . [people who] thought of literature as a specialty, like gardening or harness-racing, and not as its most vital nourishment, its only unity with past men. (pp. 150-51)

As for Royce, his favourite book is Finnegans Wake because it "has the appearance of being an act of vandalism wrought upon language," and any line in it can be used to support any of his arguments (p. 221).

Like a classical warrior Peacock will fight the enemy, "wild mutants, fellows who kept their brains in strange communal boxes which they consulted when they had to make a decision" (p. 151). As a lover of classical literature Peacock sees much wrong with twentieth-century writing. For instance, in his opinion it is the height of perversity to glorify the common man or the anti-hero or even "human derelicts":

> the most modest requirement of a hero, in life or literature, must be that he be more successful than other men at civilizing the barbarous inclinations put in him by nature. Your modern literature is full of hulks, which have in common an inability to float, and do not differ remarkably in other ways. (p. 173)

He has nothing good to say of the romantic notion that the hero can be an ordinary person. Instead he accepts the eighteenth-century idea that what is "natural" is not "civilized." For him a hero is the most civilized person, one who makes his way successfully in the world--not a "hulk" that sinks. However, such enviable civilization is difficult to instill in people. Peacock says that very little, if any, progress has been made in this regard: "In my age the concern of seriousness was the rapid diffusion of intellectual light, and indeed it happened, but we had no good of it" (p. 176). This statement somewhat reduces his claim that books were the way to accumulate "conscience" and pass it on to readers. In the nineteenth century a great many people learned to read, but in his opinion the "diffusion of intellectual light" did not help these people at all. He seems to be suggesting that an aristocracy of spirit and intellect are inborn, and only those who have it will benefit from literacy. Thus, if one follows Peacock's line of thought, one might suspect that this elite still exists, although perhaps in smaller numbers, and can gain "intellectual light" even from media other than the printed page.

4.5 Simpson satirizes the excessive romantic pastoralism in Canadian literature (the canoe, the pine tree, and the Indian are examples) and the current use of apocalyptic endings in novels. (His is a kind of McLuhanesque apocalypse.)

Having the confrontation between Peacock and Royce occur at Dogmatic Manor gives the reader a chance to meet the local Bradfarrow poet, Jonathan Farrow, and gives Simpson a chance to satirize Canadian poetry and its use of the popular concept of the wilderness pastoral. Farrow lives in Dogmatic Manor, a high-rise apartment building in Bradfarrow, in the summer because it enables him to be close to the three things he values most--the Stock Exchange in Toronto, the restaurants in Montreal, and his wilderness retreat some miles outside Bradfarrow. He had once tried to entertain his friends at dinner at his cottage, but the guests got lost in the bush and the frog and insect noises drowned out their cries for help. The walls of his apartment livingroom are "covered with expensive paintings of lakes, pine trees, and canoes navigating foaming rapids," and the poetry he writes is also of the "canoe" school (p. 126). His favourite topics are "soul" and "the national psyche" (p. 118). "Soul" he associates with the contentment which "occurred unfailingly in the summer months, at his wilderness retreat, where there were trees, lakes, rivers, several amiable species of wild animal, and a birch-bark canoe" (p. 118). Since he knows that the history of Canada and a school of Canadian art are concerned with these things, they must be representations of "the national psyche," Farrow believes. Thus, to be truly Canadian, Farrow writes in praise of canoes or pine trees, and he is proud that in a collection of sixteen of his poems there are no less than twenty-three canoes (p. 133). Peacock thinks that these poems are unbelievably bad, but Farrow has no trouble getting them published since he has shares in periodicals and owns a publishing company. This poet is the epitome of the type of writer who is so nostalgic for technologies of the past that he completely ignores writing about what is immediate and within his everyday experience.[10]

Besides canoes and pine trees, the other element of nature that is romanticized in Canadian literature is the Indian. Simpson introduces the Cumrum Indians into his novel in order to satirize the prevalent search for "psychic ancestors" in Canadian fiction that is part of the current Canadian nationalism. Hector Jorgenson believes that the Cumrum Indians came from Quumrun on the Dead Sea and resided in the Bradfarrow area for the twenty-eight years from 1778 to 1806. They were dedicated to a religion of non-violence and were distinguished from all other people by their clipped ears. Besides their non-violence, the other remarkable thing about them is that they kept records; their survival depended on this, according to Hector, since "oral traditions die easily" (p. 86). In spite of this aspect of their culture, they do not do battle on the side of literacy when they return to Bradfarrow in the 1970s. It seems that they choose this city because they had been so humiliated and victimized there, and when given the chance, they return from India and gain vengeance on the present residents of Bradfarrow (p. 165). By showing the Indians as vengeful and good at killing, Simpson hopes to dispel the romantic view we have of Indians.[11] Also he points out that when these Cumrum Indians actually were virtuous and non-violent, they fared very badly; they had to become like everyone else in order to survive in the kind of world we have. He impliesthat those people who would have the Indians as "good" Indians really are wanting them to be dead Indians.[12]

The presence of the Indians, who erupt out of the footnotes and kill everyone except Anchyr, gives Simpson a chance to satirize the concept of apocalypse. Here we have an example of "an anticlimactic apocalypse."[13] The operators of Heaven seem to have planned the end of the world on a McLuhanesque non-linear time scheme, but things got out of hand. In the midst of the massacre Bunty Oakes pops up again and explains, "about the end of the world . . . we had to collapse a lot of stuff to do it . . . speeding through history. That's like running the clock down fast, and using up all the plays. . . . We were winding her down" (p. 208). Those who have scheduled the end of the world have changed their minds again, but someone "forgot to cancel the frigging Indians" (p. 209). The whole epic battle, complete with book-shrinking machine as Trojan horse booby-trapped with tear gas, seems to be another "Herbie effect," "an imposition on the chronology of his life," that occurs while Anchyr stands at the door of the Victoria Hotel talking to his mother-in-law (p. 187). What he thinks took several hours happened in an instant. And what people take to be Anchyr's death might be an attack of lacunar amnesia, an unusually long "Herbie effect."

It is ironic that "the Peacock papers," which are presented as a factual documentary of Jeffrey Anchyr's last few months, are in novel form. According to Royce, TV has marked the end of novels as we know them because a novel cannot "contain electricity" (p. 9).

> The novel has . . . become interior in competition with X-ray. . . . outdated forms, such as novels and poetry, will prove their own obsolescence . . . Information units that do not convert easily to electricity are obsolete.

> Poetry is the very poorest form of information-movement. Novels are anti-information, in the sense that they are all fabrications, which is to say, myths and fables. (p. 10)

Perhaps it would be more suitable (if we agree with Royce about the novel) for Anchyr's story and the story of the change from print to electronic technology to take the form of a TV play about the takeover of print by electronics or to exist not as printed pages but as a microfilm or computer card. As it is, it seems impossible to believe completely in the conversion of the print media to electronics while we have this book, The Peacock Papers, in our hands.[14] It does not seem possible that Peacock's vision of a Hell on earth is imminent while libraries, schools, and homes have books which people read. However, depending on whether one takes an optimistic or pessimistic view of the changeover to a new technology, one can see the future of mankind as "a new golden age of stability and philosophic contentment" or as a future where "we have no basis whatsoever for even the tiniest flicker of hope" (p. 224, p. 225). The first view might make us "feel warmer toward software" (that is, toward TV sets, etc.), but the second view might make us swear at TV programs or even take an axe to the set (pp. 225-26). A position somewhere between these two might be most realistic. The epilogue to the novel, however, does not resolve the problem for us; whether we should gladly accept new technologies or live in gloomy nostalgia for technologies of the past is a question Simpson raises but does not answer.

4.6 The protagonist of "The Savages", a computer operator who believes in reason and technology, constantly escapes into fantasies about the wilderness. Through his work and his fantasies, he attempts to evade facing up to his own essentially irrational nature. The intruding teenagers share Polson's dangerous vision of the wilderness pastoral, and Simpson clearly indicates that both Polson and the teenagers are "savages." Thus, according to Simpson, romantic pastoralism of any type is not a viable ideology in a technological world. Ultimately, he does not take sides between old and new technologies; he presents the issue and leaves it to us to decide.

The immediately noticeable connection between Simpson's two novels and his short story "The Savages" is the importance of the computer in each work. As in the novels, the computer in "The Savages" can be taken to represent the entire electronic technology. Much as the train was seen as the mechanical monster, the technological enemy of the good life in the nineteenth century, the computer fulfills that role for us--or so Simpson suggests in Arkwright and The Peacock Papers. "The Savages" follows the same pattern in regard to Simpson's attitude toward technology, but his view of romantic pastoralism is even more negative in this story. That is, the desire to escape into the wilderness (or, by implication, to Crete or into nostalgia for past technologies) is seen as an even less viable alternative to urban life. In this rather grim story Simpson is equally critical of technology and pastoralism.

Charles Polson, the thirty-seven year-old protagonist of "The Savages", is enamoured of technology. The secret passion of his life is his roomful of model trains which he keeps locked away from everyone. He seems, in fact, to value his train-set above his young wife. In the age of electronics the train has shrunk in significance to the size of a toy, and Polson's passion for his toy train reveals his nostalgia for past technologies. However, his nostalgia for the past does not interfere with his job as computer operator for an electronics company-- his train-set is his weekend indulgence. During the week he is the most conscientious of the five operators; he enjoys his work, and his machine is never idle. Polson, a believer in technology and system, regards himself as a civilized man. But where the computer problems originate or what is done with them once they are solved does not concern him. The moral or social implications of his work do not matter to him, and this attitude toward his work is noteworthy because his computer is part of government defense-research projects. He may be a "civilized" man in some ways, but he has no greater a social conscience than a crossword puzzle addict.

The idea of "value" and its relation to machines supplies the introduction to the story. The notice in the machine room says that the electronic machine is the servant of man and that the value of the work done by the machine is to be decided by people; but Jaimer, the boss, is like a monk or a wraith or "a priest performing a ceremony involving blood sacrifice" as he coordinates the work in the office.[15] It is clear that Jaimer regards the "attendants of the machines" as servants of the machines, not their masters, and himself as the priest of a higher power, which is the computer (p. 144). There is no doubt that working in such an environment has affected Polson to a considerable extent.

One of the effects of his love for his work is that Polson is never free of his work. Even on weekends at his cottage computer problems flash through his head in anticipation of Monday morning. Solutions to the problems come at the most unlikely times almost as though part of his mind is constantly occupied with these solutions and his total attention is not there to be given to solving the problems of his life. For instance, when the four teenagers invade his property and at the moment Barbie loses her towel as she tries to go into the house to get clothes, the solution to a computer problem at work pops into his mind. Then, when Polson gets knocked down by one of the young men the same thing happens:

> Montgomery stood over him, holding the rifle like a club. We must know the value of the variable responses in F. 18 before we can proceed, and we must first distinguish variable from arbitrary. These people are savages. They could have killed me. (p. 154)

His work seems to be the reason for his existence. Since he's the only one who can work out certain problems at the office, that seems reason enough for Polson to think that Eric "can't possibly kill me" (p. 156).

Another of the effects of Polson's urban, technological life is his constant escape into fantasies about the wilderness. In a manner of speaking he does escape from his work in Toronto to his cottage 140 miles from the city, but the differences between his being in the city or in the country are minimal. Thoughts of his work accompany him wherever he goes. His model train-set is at the cottage for his amusement, and his car and 27-foot cruiser are at his disposal. The cabin looks like a pioneer residence, but it presents a false appearance; it is really a five-room house with all the urban conveniences. There is no indication that he would like things less comfortable and convenient and more rustic. Perhaps because the wilderness has become totally urbanized (probably through choice), Polson's pastoralism takes the form of nostalgia for the true wilderness that existed more than a hundred years in the past. He wishes that he had been alive a hundred years ago because he is so sure that he could have coped bravely and independently with the wilderness then. He imagines himself as a kind of Etienne Brûlé:

> Etienne Brûlé, that's the life. The scenery and Indian women. Unspoilt country. Unspoilt, untouched, the trees and lakes. The young women, the sun. I could have made it then. . . .

> A great fighter, Charles Polson, respected even by the Iroquois . . . alert, aware of the tracking Iroquois, a young girl in my sleeping-bag, the beautiful country. (p. 147)

Love for the wild country is combined with sexual vitality and the ability to destroy Indians, the three being the essential elements in Polson's vision of the pastoral life. He wonders why he can't think of himself as a hermit in the wilderness enjoying nature for itself and comes to the conclusion that his fantasy requires an enemy (Indians) to fight and a woman to make love to. Being alone in the wilderness would not allow for any opportunities to enjoy these two kinds of macho "moments of glory" (p. 162). Alone, he would be less than a hero in the Hemingway style. And, of course, glory would always be assured because in his hands is a more powerful weapon. In his fantasies Polson always has a rifle while the Indians have only bows and arrows; and, presumably, any woman would be glad to submit to the man with the superior technology.

However glorious his fantasy life, Polson's real life is quite different. Simpson seems to suggest that Polson's work and the type of personality he has, which is admirably suited to his work, makes him completely unsuitable to be Barbie's husband. His wife is a Barbie-doll, as her name indicates. She is much younger than he is, and for him she seems to be a playful puppy or "a child of nature" (p. 148). Later we are told that she has "a lovely and unreadable face" and that "her prettiness was always a kind of mask" (p. 170, p. 168). It appears that she is a complete mystery to her husband. Polson seems to have married her for her physical attributes, but work is too demanding for him to make love to her often. He needs Saturday for rest, and then Sunday is "love-day" if he feels in the mood. After three months of marriage he thinks this state of affairs is not totally satisfactory and muses upon the possibility of setting up a system of love-making since "everything falls before a system" (p. 148). On the whole, system or no system, Polson appears to be a failure at sex, and perhaps this is the reason for his sex-and-wilderness fantasies. However, the fantasy of sex in a natural setting remains just that--a fantasy. The one time Polson and Barbie actually try to make it a reality, they are defeated by nature:

> Barbie was excited, and excitingly eager to please him. But in spite of her willingness they were defeated by the sharpness of the pine needles, by nature's sounds, which counterfeited the approach of strangers, and by Barbie's dread of insects. (p. 157)

Except in his imagination Polson seems to be a cold, unemotional man. It could be that his obsession with technology makes it impossible for him to be a loving person. At one point where Barbie has emerged from her swim, she kneels provocatively by his hammock and kisses him passionately; "he held her head as if only her head existed" (p. 149). Any sexual advance on her part Polson sees as an attack that he wants to fend off with "a swift chop on the windpipe" (p. 149). It is doubtful that any system of love-making that he might come up with will change his basic attitude toward women and sex.

There is considerable evidence that the romantic or primitive vision of the pastoral life that Polson holds is shared by the intruding teenagers in spite of the generation gap. Their vision of the perfect life is to take food, cars, and anything else they want and "go back to a natural system" (p. 154). This natural system would enable the young and strong to take anything away from anyone who couldn't defend himself or herself. The "best" man would be the strongest man. The boys' idea of freedom and pleasure includes the existence of slaves and a harem.

What seems to be happening when Montgomery and Francis "sort of rape" Barbie is that they are acting out their fantasies, and sex is definitely a part of their idea of life in the wilderness. This idea they share with Polson, and like the older man, Montgomery is nostalgic for the far-off past and the unspoiled wilderness; if the bomb falls, he plans to escape into the forest:

> I'll be in the forest. That's the life, the wilderness. I'll be there with a gun and a boat. . . . trees and rivers and animals. Lakes. . . . the Sioux and Ojibway, they loved it, living on their stuff, their pemmican and wild rice. (p. 155)

Both Polson and Montgomery play fantasy games. Very likely even with the help of guns and boats (in their hands canoes and bows and arrows probably would be useless) neither could survive in the real wilderness. Perhaps that is one of the main points of "The Savages": Simpson seems to be saying that the desire to go back to nature is an impossible fantasy, not a viable alternative to urban life, and he uses people from two generations to show how prevalent the fantasy is.[16]

The reason the young people give for invading Polson's property and attacking him, and perhaps it is the reason for their particular type of pastoral fantasy, is that the technological world has gone mad. Montgomery tells Polson, "We can't come back later because by then everybody might be atomic dust. That's the threat we of the younger generation live under, you know " (pp. 150-51). The four of them are playing at being survivors of a nuclear war. Then seeing Polson and Barbie gave them the idea of "attacking" and exercising power over them. Later, when things get out of hand, they explain that they were "only fooling around," "just playing a game" (p. 166, p. 171). For them the fantasy "enemy" is not the Indians as it is for Polson; it is the middle-aged men who have "made it" in the technological world. At one point Eric says he would like to kill Polson because "you guys are ruining everything. . . . There are too many of you bastard stinkers," and Montgomery hates Polson because he's a "stinking money-bags" (p. 153, p. 168).

The fantasy about wilderness that Polson shares with the younger men is dangerous because the image of heroism that it involves results in destructive acts. When Eric takes Polson into the forest away from the group, the "great white hunter" image enters Polson's mind and his terror is in ironic contrast to it: "His courage and alertness keep him alive in the wild land. . . . His whole body was weak with terror " (p. 157). When he manages to get Eric's knife away from him without him knowing, the terror lessens. Then, although Barbie finds Eric's advances completely acceptable, Polson becomes jealous and stabs him with his own knife. Presumably an attitude of possessiveness and jealousy is part of Polson's image of himself as hero, and he must live up to it or suffer the shame of failure. When he kills Eric "a voice of vanity said that he was finding his real self, the man he knew in the wilderness. This was the Polson of the Indians " (p. 164). He must kill to fulfill his idea of ideal heroic action. Francis' part in the "rape" of Barbie warrants a death sentence according to Polson so he goes and slashes Francis' throat while the boy is lying defenceless in a hammock.

Polson's confidence and urge to action depends on having a weapon in his hand. In a kind of power-play or attempt to see how far he can go in reducing Polson's ego, Montgomery threatens to shoot the older man; Polson sees safety in humiliation and begs for his life. However, when he accidently knocks Montgomery over and gets the rifle, he feels he has the upper hand: "He took it as a gift of his life, as the miracle from heaven he had wanted. He gripped the weapon thankfully. Just having the power was enough, everything" (p. 169). The power to kill another person restores Polson. For him the difference between him and Montgomery, as a representative of the younger generation, is that Polson is master of technology and Montgomery a mere destroyer of it. He brags to Montgomery, "I can mend the telephone line, and I'd say it's one of the differences between you and me, that I can mend the line but you, you can only cut it" (p. 170). His understanding and control of technology is his great pride, and he relishes control of people too. This idea of control by the rational mind is his definition of civilization. As he plans to tie up Montgomery and Penelope and call the police, he experiences "a growth of pride in his mind. The reconquering mind, the distinction between man and animal, making arrangements for the return of a civilized ethic to his world" (p. 170). Polson sees himself as having "the mind of a civilized man," and the gun becomes more than a weapon; it symbolizes "power taken from anarchy and held by a defender of law" (p. 170, p. 171).

With the gun in his hand and belief in "the reconquering mind" restored,

> he felt the radiating sense of command in the idea of what had happened, in its resemblance to his idle visions. They might have been three savage Indians and I won. Charles Polson at camp, unarmed in the wilderness, an outpost of civilization; and not expecting an attack. They came out of the forest, three of the barbarians. (p. 172)

For a moment he feels pride, but the humiliation of begging for his life, something his ideal hero would never do, has cast a black shadow on his image of glory: "the simplicity was gone. Those bright visions can never come again now. . . . shame like filth on every bright part. The wilderness, and the enemy Indians, they mean filthy shame for me. They were a harmless joy " (p. 172). Polson thinks that his fantasies were a harmless joy, but he is wrong; all the disturbing events of these few hours have proven how harmful his fantasies are. He blames Montgomery for stealing Barbie away from him forever and, equally important, the boy has destroyed Polson's fantasies of glory in the wilderness. Montgomery's coolness and unconcern in the face of Polson's power over him ignite the older man's anger, and he pulls the trigger of the gun. When the rifle does not fire, he sees that it is a rusty antique, a futile plaything, and perhaps this provides a comment on his reliance on technologies of various kinds (p. 173). Even though Montgomery walks away alive, Polson feels guilty-- after all, he prided himself in his rational mind, and it gave way under stress. All the things he has valued most have been destroyed:

> Under the edged insistence of guilt, Polson searched for honour, retreating to the enlightenment that lifted him above his fellows. . . . but God my mind abdicated, the thing I value highest is a servant of the rest. How does it make me a civilized man if it can't control my murderous hands? . . . There was never honour, nor was there pity. . . . I should put away my playthings and find out what I am now. This day has destroyed me. It has left me with nothing. (p. 173)

Polson's hands are murderous only in that they have killed two people; they are merely tools of the murderous emotions that he has never acknowledged within himself. The mind, he sees, is slave of the emotions; and by his own definition of what makes a civilized man, Polson himself is a savage. Like Gulliver recognizing the kinship between himself and the odious Yahoos, Polson sees for the first time that he is subject to the irrational and that his "playthings" (that is, technology) do not protect him from it. In addition, possession of a mind doesn't make a man better than an animal or better than other less "civilized" men; it is what he does with it that counts, and for Polson it has brought about his downfall as much as his murderous emotions have--"no more than his own imagination had brought the ruin on Polson" (p. 169).

In "The Savages", as in Arkwright and The Peacock Papers, the wilderness is not to be seen as a viable escape from technological, urban life even though urban life and the work that people do in cities may encourage such escape. Polson does not blame his life and work for his fantasies of wilderness escape, but there does seem to be a cause-and-effect relationship operating between the two. Too little of that urban world is shown for us to know definitely if its existence is justification enough for the two cases of wilderness fantasy that Simpson chooses to relate in this story. There is enough evidence, however, for the reader to judge that there is nothing inherent in city life that keeps the emotions healthy or develops the spiritual part of a person. Nevertheless, in the three works by Simpson there is no indication, either, that these things can be found in the wilderness or in fantasies about the wilderness or, as in The Peacock Papers, in nostalgia for the technologies of the past. Simpson is like Swift in judging that the problems that people must ultimately face are the problems of human nature. The "wily savage" exists in each person as does the "conquering mind," and neither one can be denied as a component of the human psyche and yet neither is the salvation of man. In any examination of the conflicting elements in human nature or the conflict between nature and technology, Simpson would say that critical awareness of the issues is of primary importance followed, perhaps, by the courage needed to face solutions that resolve nothing or answers that lead to more questions.

CHAPTER V

MORDECAI RICHLER

If pastoralism is associated strictly with life in the country, Mordecai Richler is one of the least pastoral of Canadian writers. He is not interested in writing about nature. In his novels there are few references to nature, and nowhere is there evidence that pastoralism, in the sense of a return to nature, is the positive force for him that it is for other writers. His concern seems to lie with moral decisions made by people as they live in a complex urban environment and with the ways that technology--especially the movies--modifies their consciousness. Thus, if the term pastoralism is used at all to describe his work, it would have to be in the area of nostalgia for childhood--and of nostalgia for the things (outmoded technologies in a past environment) that existed during that period in the past. Under the impact of new technology Richler converts the older, urban environment into pastoral art. The motion picture has not been a new technology for a long time now: hence, the feeling we have that his picture of city life is pastoral, _passé_. Used in this way the term "pastoral" is appropriate when describing some of Richler's writing.

5.1 Mordecai Richler uses technology (and occasionally nature) to say something important about his characters and their society. The technology that he is most interested in is the motion picture, which is undoubtedly one of the most powerful technologies in the modification of consciousness. Movies, especially Hollywood movies, have been influential in Richler's life as they are in the lives of his characters. His preoccupation with them gives his work a pastoral quality since they are no longer a new technology.

Because of his own lack of knowledge of and lack of interest in nature, Mordecai Richler is a good example of his statement that "most Jews are remarkably deficient in a knowledge of nature."[1] For this reason, the existence of a pastoral retreat plays a very small part in his novels. In all his novels, however, Richler uses technology to say something important about the characters and society he chooses to examine and criticize. Somewhat in the manner of Atwood, Richler uses technology to identify the values of his characters, and,like Simpson, Richler uses his knowledge of urban technology to satirize that urban world. In the process he pokes fun at such romantic primitivist notions as the noble savage. As a satiric and comic writer, he does not accept things as they are; he says that he writes "out of a kind of disgust with things as they are" and tries to be "an honest witness to [his] times."[2] The urban may be the whole world for him, but within those limits he feels free to examine and criticize what he sees.

Richler's last three novels are most interesting for a study of his use of images of technology and nature, but his earlier works deserve some attention. In Son of a Smaller Hero, for instance, there are four people directly affected by technology, and all the others are indirectly affected. Noah's father seeks escape from his wife and from family responsibilities by going to the movies every Sunday. Ida, Melech Adler's only unmarried daughter, is also a movie fan, and it is clear that she is unmarried because no real man meets with her expectations of a husband--expectations that have had their source in movies. There is also Miriam's father who was injured unloading a ship and had to become a night watchman as a result. There are two things she remembers about him: "He fixed up an adorable little garden in the corner of the junk yard, just beside his shack"[3] where she could play, and, as if to reinforce his association with nature, he is killed by a truck. Miriam remembers his death and recounts her memory to Noah Adler, her lover: "he ran towards that truck waving his fists in the air as though to break it. The yell that came from his lips . . . I honestly think that he meant to smash that truck " (p. 103). When Miriam leaves her husband, she goes with Noah to a pastoral retreat in the Laurentians. There they have "a month together that was full of loving and sun and idleness" (p. 120). However, Noah is called back to real life when his father, a derrick operator in Melech's scrap yard, dies in a fire. A crane is used to dig the body out of the rubble, and at the funeral "the silver motor-cycles swung around in front of the hearse and spun in circles like bewildered, injured birds " (p. 147). This image of motorcycles as birds completes the pattern: the natural world is a place of temporary escape and is weak in comparison with the technological urban world which seems to be the real one, one of power even to the point of destruction.

In A Choice of Enemies Norman Price, a Canadian in London, finds himself working with American emigrés, most of whom are in films in one way or another as are the men in St. Urbain's Horseman. Although a Canadian, Norman is one of the many writers blacklisted and living in "exile" in London after the McCarthy era. In this group of people "doing well" is judged by the possession of cars and appliances. Norman has no refrigerator, TV or deep-freeze in his flat; it seems cozy to him, but he decides it would seem seedy to affluent North Americans (p. 4). Charlie, an old friend of Norman's, sees himself as "a beautiful person bashed to bits by the soul-destroying machine of American capitalism," but for him the car is a symbol of success and a TV and record player are necessities (p. 141). Norman's young brother, Nicky, is stationed with the American army in Germany where "big American cars [are] a casual proof of the conqueror's affluence" (p. 12). Against this simplistic view of success is presented an equally simplistic, and perhaps somewhat libertine, pastoral vision. At a party Nicky "suddenly wished that this stuffy room could be transformed into a wood and that all the girls, full of sun and pain and laughter, could go dancing round the trees" (p. 24). And at the end when Ernst escapes to Montreal, his dream of success includes a cottage in the Laurentians (p. 206).

In part The Incomparable Atuk is a satire about the noble savage. Atuk could be considered a savage innocent abroad in Toronto, but Richler has given him an extravagant interest in money, success, and sex in order to undermine our romantic concept of the noble savage. Once the white people in the south discover carved Eskimo artifacts, Atuk becomes an entrepreneur. He transports his relatives from the north and keeps them prisoner in a basement in Toronto where they make the desired artifacts. However, because they can't produce enough by hand, they become the operators of molds and machinery with which they can turn out many more objects. Ignak, the malcontent, resents Atuk for wanting them to sculpt and paint "badly" and thinks that prettier things will be more appreciated.[4] He doesn't know that connoisseurs of Eskimo art want the primitive technique to show (even if the object is machine produced). To get Ignak out of the way, Atuk villainously arranges for him to get killed crossing the street against the light. More amusingly, Atuk uses the TV as reward for his workers' hard work, and in one of the funniest incidents in the book he combines modern and primitive technology and pretends that the TV set is a magic box that he controls by going into a trance (p. 82). In this way he manages to deceive his relatives for a long time as to his supposedly supernatural powers.

The real and perhaps insidious power of the film and TV media in the modification of consciousness is amusingly indicated when Atuk's father insists on being called Old One after he has been in a National Film Board documentary on the Eskimo (p. 95). He talks like a film Eskimo as well. It's as though his identity had been supplied by a film. Another effect of TV is that the "Toronto wits," who are much in demand on TV talk programs, will not be witty at private dinners because they receive no payment. Gore's solution is to televize his special annual dinner and pay each "performer." A last and deadly result is the TV audience's desire for more and more startling entertainment and the TV industry's related concern with "ratings." At the end of the novel Atuk is sacrificed as a martyr for the Canadian nationalist cause and for the Canadian audience's love of sensation. He is guillotined on a TV quiz program called "Stick Your Neck Out" when he doesn't know the answer to the last question asked him.

Richler acknowledges that Hollywood movies had a great impact on his consciousness and that of his generation of urban Canadians. Films have even affected new techniques in novel-writing, he claims; but in his own novels, film provides the subject matter and milieu more than it does the technique.[5] Because movies are important to Richler, they are becoming increasingly important in his novels. In The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz, Duddy, with the help of Peter John Friar, makes movies of bar mitzvahs and weddings in order to raise money to buy land. The "documentary" that Friar concocts of the Bernie Farber bar mitzvah is a comic highlight of the novel (and of the movie based on Richler's novel). To increase his income Duddy also goes into the distribution of films to charitable institutions and summer resorts. And, of course, in his adolescence movies are an important part of his life: one of his dreams, in fact, consists of his playing the Bogart role in The Maltese Falcon. Movies play an even more important part in Richler's last two novels, Cocksure and St. Urbain's Horseman. Here he goes even further than Simpson, who showed in Arkwright how TV and movies affect our perception of reality, in his examination and criticism of the influence on perception of the film medium. However, because the motion picture is not really a new technology, Richler's concern with movies seems to be rather an old-fashioned concern. Somewhat in the manner of Wayland Drew, Richler puts the technological horizon in the past rather than seeing it as the line between an older environment and the new technology. The advent of new technologies such as TV has made the motion picture seem outmoded even though movies continue to be made. Nevertheless, without recognizing the part that an older technology can play in the pastoral pattern, Richler makes many astute observations on the power that the motion picture has over our consciousness.

For instance, movies control "the images Protestant America" worships.[6] The power of movie-makers is tremendous; the Star Maker in Cocksure says that movies were made "to prop up the myths of the American heartland" and that if it were to their advantage the makers could change or destroy these myths (p. 138). The consciousness of individuals and the identity of a whole nation depend to a large extent on this technology. Cocksure is a satire about (amongst other things) the cult of youth, organ transplants, and the movie business. The connection between these apparently disparate subjects is managed cleverly by Richler. Because of Hollywood's influence, youth and good looks have the glamour and desirability that middle-age, old-age, and ugliness at any age don't have. The Star Maker, the focal point of Richler's satire, makes movie stars that will appeal to the American audience and influence their values and lives, and as part of this pattern he (with the help of various medical technologists) has himself constantly remade so that he is ageless and undying (although most likely not good-looking too). Following him wherever he goes are a portable operating theatre with numerous doctors and nurses in attendance, a refrigeration truck in which spare parts are kept, a kidney-cleansing unit, a mechanical heart, extra blood and plasma, and, most grotesquely of all, an entourage of spare-parts men (and later, probably, women too) who contribute parts of their bodies to keep the Star Maker renewed. It seems that even those closest to him are not exempt from making enforced contributions. For instance, Dino Tomasso, the Star Maker's heir apparent, has a leg and two fingers missing; and in the course of the novel he has to give up one eye, and there are plans to take his other eye as well. One of the spare-parts men has no arms; obviously the Star Maker must have needed them at one time. The Star Maker's legs are of different sizes and his hands are of different sizes and ages. Apparently he has more than one penis--in case one doesn't work! The voice-box may be a part of the body that is not transplantable because Mortimer notices that the Star Maker's voice doesn't sound human: "The Star Maker spoke in wheezing, metallic tones, the voice coming through a tube rumored to be platinum" (p. 72). When Mortimer finally gets to meet the Star Maker he sees that

> a lead taped to an artery in his arm ran to renal dialyzer, wherein the Star Maker's blood flowed over one side of a semipermeable membrane of Cuprophane, and was cleansed of undesirable molecules and toxic materials before it ran into the body through another vein. (p. 134)

The Star Maker is interested in Mortimer because of his "absolutely marvy lymphatic system" which might be of use some day (p. 133). And Polly Morgan is needed because she has the same rare blood type as the Star Maker; that coincidence makes Polly no more than a walking blood transfusion.

The most radical transformation of the Star Maker's body occurs after Dino says in anger, "Go fuck yourself," and the Star Maker gets the idea that that is exactly what he would like to do to produce his own heir and depose Dino (p. 3). When Mortimer first meets him, it is clear that the Star Maker is on his way to becoming a woman; he takes hormone injections, he is growing breasts, and his voice wavers between soprano and baritone. The second time Mortimer visits the Star Maker, he is essentially a woman (while still remaining a man)--and pregnant. He/she says, "I . . . am a modern medical miracle" (p. 199). Transsexuals interest him: "If they can make cunts for men and outfit girls with cocks, well, why not everything, the whole shebang, within one human body?" (p. 202). After countless operations and transplants he/she is now able to reproduce him/herself. Besides God, the Star Maker is "the first self-contained creator" (p. 202). He/she is an example of technology gone mad.

Perhaps it is because the Star Maker was so successful in making movie stars that he got the idea that he can make himself into whatever he wishes. Perhaps working with movies changed his idea of what is possible. Over the years movie-makers gradually discovered that through cinematic technique a star's less favoured parts could be removed on screen and pictures of perfect parts substituted. Singing could be dubbed, and stunts could be done by stunt-riders. Then came the time when a body could be remade by cosmetic surgery, hair transplants, etc. However, the actors and actresses were not docile enough, so the Star Maker hired scientists to make him a Star. After experiments the Third Star had "three expressions . . . Walked very, very nice. Talked in sentences as long as twelve words each. He couldn't read actual books or scripts, making him almost human, hah? But he could understand and remember synopses" (p. 140). This life-like dummy was very successful with the audiences, but in the middle of his fiftieth picture he blew up because he was worn out. The current "greatest, all-time favorite box-office Star" is stored in a velvet-lined, mothproofed, seven-foot box and brought out only to star in a movie (p. 5). That's why he's aged so little in fifteen years. But this human-like balloon has to be careful not to fall; a break or puncture would be the end of him, and scientists are not interested in creating more stars. The Star Maker complains that his group of scientists "went commercial" and "left us for germ warfare or H-bomb production" (p. 142).

The "ordinary" is anathema to the movie business, and movies have made the ordinary unappealing in real life. It is a business that feeds on the exotic, on lives that are different. It makes ordinary lives seem ridiculous and worthless. Mortimer Griffin, an editor at Oriole Press, is an ordinary man who has grown up with movies and has an inferiority complex because he doesn't measure up in any way to the movie stars. When his "friend" Ziggy Spicehandler makes a Film of Fact, Mortimer Griffin, the ordinary man, is cast as "that well-adjusted man, that villain" (p. 55). However, even the traditionally extraordinary and heroic are scorned. For instance, Mortimer, the winner of one of the fourteen VC's given to Canadians in World War II, is interviewed on a TV program and his bravery in battle is made to seem laughable. Everything is either extravagantly praised or denigrated for audience satisfaction and high TV ratings.

5.2 Movies provide a kind of vicarious living. In Cocksure Richler shows how an addiction to movies can alter the perception of reality of a fanatical movie-goer. In St. Urbain's Horseman technologies involved in the making of movies dominate Jake's life and the lives of people around him and make their lives seem artificial and unconnected with reality.

In addition, movies have modified our perception of reality in another way. For some people the distinction between life and movies becomes blurred. In Cocksure Polly Morgan is so addicted to movies that her life has started imitating art (especially bad film art). The first time we see her she is with Hy at the office playing a scene from some movie she remembers; she screams as though he were attacking her and emerges with her clothes ripped in appropriate places (p. 37). Another time, after her fourth movie of the day, she ~~tells~~ the taxi driver to drive her to Annabel's: "Until he pulled up before the discothèque in Berkeley Square, the taxi driver, absorbed in a reverie of his own, didn't notice that his fare was no longer there. His taxi was empty " (p. 60). Polly has "faded" into the next scene of the "movie" which is her life. She seems to exist only when she as heroine of a movie would exist. All the boring, ordinary parts of life are omitted, and there is a lot of fading out from scene to scene where the viewer's imagination must fill in the scenes left out. Richler seems to be using this character and her non-existence between scenes to show how an addiction to movies can alter the perception of reality of the addict. Or perhaps he is making fun of movies of the type (and most of them are of this type) that float from one high moment in the hero's or heroine's life to the next and leave out all the rest. Everything Polly does seems to be taken out of a bad romantic movie and all her words out of a bad script. For instance, when everything is going badly for Mortimer, he stops in for a drink at The Eight Bells and a scene from a Bogart movie ensues: "Suddenly Polly Morgan stood before him. 'Having a rough time?' she asked. 'Somewhat.' 'If ever you want me,' she said with a smile, 'just whistle '" (p. 178).

Polly's apartment is a movie set. There is a large poster of Humphrey Bogart on the wall. All the rows and rows of bookshelves are "not books at all, but photographs of books pasted to the wall " (p. 179). There is a mock fireplace with flickering lights in the grate and a tape recording of the crackle of a real fire. Mortimer discovers that the table is set for two with candles, one red rose in a vase, and a bottle of champagne in a silver bucket. On the bedside table are a bottle of wine and two glasses. The background music is Chopin's music from A Song to Remember. Polly's dialogue is a rehash of corny lines she remembers from movies she has seen. For example:

> "I wish . . . oh, I wish," she whispered.
> "What?"
> "I wish we had met ten years ago."
> A month ago would have done nicely, he thought bitterly.
> "No," she corrected herself. "Ten years ago, well, we were two different people, we wouldn't have--" She stopped short. "Wrong again. I'd have loved you in any time, any place."
> "Loved me," he exclaimed.

> All the tenderness went out of Polly's face. She seemed immensely irritated with herself. "Did I do that badly?" she asked. "Was I standing in the wrong place?" (p. 180)

Polly is the romantic heroine, and Mortimer is expected to serve as both the leading man and the director.

Mortimer's main problem in playing along with Polly is that he never gets anything to eat. There is the before-dinner scene that ends with Polly rushing out to see to her cooking and immediately fades out to the after-dinner scene:

> He had, it seemed to him, only rested for a minute, two at the most, when the next thing he knew . . . they were lying on pillows in front of the fire, she in his arms, a tray with coffee and brandy on the floor beside them. (p. 181)

Everything in the room appears as though they have eaten a good meal--the candle is burned down, the champagne bottle is empty, the roast beef is almost all gone--but Mortimer is very hungry and he's sure that he hasn't eaten a bite. What has happened is that he has become a part of Polly's movie-like existence, and that existence doesn't include such mundane things as cooking and eating. Love-making is the same; Mortimer experiences only the before and after scenes and not the act itself. He is, of course, bewildered. As he leaves Polly's apartment, he peeks into the kitchen and finds that there are no dirty pots or dishes there: "all he found in the kitchen was stacks and stacks of film scripts, shooting scripts complete with camera directions " (p. 183). Polly had not cooked dinner at all.

Mortimer's next "scene" with Polly is her announcement that she is pregnant. He knows that this is impossible and finally sits down and reads the screenplays by which Polly plays her life. So when next evening she goes for an abortion, Mortimer is prepared and plays along. Too bad it's not autumn with the leaves falling to make the scene more touching, Mortimer thinks. He leaves her going into the doctor's house and then walks back to the flat "allowing her time to change and adjust mentally for the next scene, the obligatory dissolve to the bedroom" (p. 196). One day they go for a picnic in Richmond Park for the sex-and-nature scene that movies love. Just as passion overwhelms them there is a cut away "to the stags locking horns in the distance" (p. 197). Mortimer knows, however, that "the affair, such as it was, had only been consummated on the wide screen of her imagination" making it possible for Polly to remain a virgin and Mortimer to be the world's greatest lover, although impotent (p. 197). Living with Polly is

> a mixed pleasure. If, for instance, she looked up a complicated meal in Larousse, he had to reconcile himself to a hasty sandwich secretly consumed in the toilet, for she was bound to cut from pondering the sauce to serving coffee and brandy, just as she dissolved from his cupping a breast to the gratifying pillow talk that followed the most satisfying lovemaking. (p. 196)

Mortimer is worried in advance. He sees that movies are getting more and more explicit about sex, and when they can show all the details of lovemaking on the screen, Polly will know he's a failure. Now, in movies everything to do with lovemaking is often shown, but since cooking and eating are still not considered to be activities of interest to film-makers, Mortimer might still go hungry!

At the end of the novel when Mortimer knows for sure that the Star Maker will have him killed, Polly's movie clichés about "walking tall," "staying and fighting," and "spending your life on the run" are no help to him at all. In the last "scene" Mortimer sees that the Star Maker's henchmen are waiting on the street and urges Polly to slip out the back way, run, and call the police from the phone booth. This is a mistake. He should have gone himself. Although he emphasizes that "this is no movie. This is real," Polly's "movie-mindedness" ensures tragedy for Mortimer:

> Polly ran. She ran and ran. The first telephone booth she came to was empty, which wouldn't have done at all. She continued, breathless, to the next booth where, fortunately, a long-haired teenager was chattering endlessly, unaware that a man's life was at stake. . . . [Finally] Polly deposited her sixpence and dialed nine nine nine. . . .
>
> "Is there anyone there?" the officer asked.
>
> Gratefully, Polly hung up, hung up without speaking, and on the wide screen that was her mind's eye, sirens sounded, police cars heaving into Beaufort Street in the nick of time. Crowds formed. They embraced. Somewhere in the night a bird was singing. Tomorrow the sun would come up. (pp. 215-16)

That's how it is in movies, but in real life we assume that Mortimer is killed because Polly didn't say anything to the police officer on the phone. What Polly's reaction would be when she returns to her apartment, finds no police with their cars and no crowds, finds Mortimer either dead or gone, is impossible to predict. Such events are not scripted into her life, and through the invention of Polly Morgan, Richler has shown how movies can usurp life.[7]

Jake Hersh, the narrator of St. Urbain's Horseman, is a successful TV and movie director in London, and movies play an important part in his life and in that of other characters in the novel. Appropriately, movie techniques (flashbacks, dissolves, trackbacks) are used in the construction of the novel. A considerable portion of the novel consists of flashbacks of real events in Jake's past and also of his fantasies about the past. Some of his fantasies take the form of a movie script which he has written. Past technology in the form of newspapers and magazines give additional bits of information about what is going on in the world at the time of Jake's present crisis. Generally, technologies involved in making movies dominate Jake's life even when he isn't at work. For instance, when he comes back a day early from Montreal and catches Harry and Ingrid in his house, he later describes the encounter in cinematic terms: "As in a frozen frame, he was to remember, they scrutinized each other."[8]

In some ways Jake's life and the lives of his friends are as divorced from reality as is Polly Morgan's. G. David Sheps points out that "more acutely than any others they live in a world where desires and aesthetics become commodities, where values and achievements are merely the fast changing inventory of a cultural supermarket of images and reputations."[9] In dark moods Jake sometimes thinks that his work is ephemeral and a con job on the public, but Richler's novel shows how important movies are in our society and what a great (positive or negative) effect they have on individuals. Movie work may be a con job, but its effect on our consciousness is hardly ephemeral. And the people who work in the movie industry have great power. To be a movie star or anyone else involved in films is to be somebody important. As a writer in Montreal points out to Jake, one of Canada's claims to fame is that Walter Pidgeon was born here (p. 119). A movie director is a figure of glamour and power. Harry Stein meets Ingrid in a bar and, impersonating Jake, tells her he is a movie director, and she is willing to go along with him. He knows that if he admitted that he works in an accountant's office she wouldn't look twice at him.

Jake's life has been incredibly influenced by the movies he has seen. He recognizes that movies emphasize already strong national myths, that whole countries are judged by their movie heroes: young Canadians

> could see the likes of John Wayne, Clark Gable, and Robert Taylor making mincemeat of the Panzers, while Noel Coward, Laurence Olivier, and the others seen in a spate of British war films had all looked too humanly vulnerable. Like you, they could suffer heart failure, rectal polyps, and disrespectful children. (p. 107)

His personal memories of World War II are memories of movies he saw at that time--rather different memories from the ones those who actually lived through the war have. For him "evacuee" connotes "huggable Margaret O'Brien, shrinking in the corner of a foreign station platform that was forever England" with Robert Young and Dorothy McGuire as her parents (p. 21). "Oh to be blitzed, Jake used to dream, orphaned and adopted by M-G-M" (p. 21). But what Harry suffered as a real-life evacuee in England was not what was ever shown in the movies Jake saw. At the age of ten he was taken from London to "the outer wilds of Buckinghamshire" (p. 22). Harry points out to Jake:

> You think the war was all fun and games, don't you. After the raid, cockneys crawling out of the rubble with a wisecrack. Churchill traipsing through the bomb damage and asking, "Are we downcast?" the forelock-touching workers shouting back, "No!" (p. 22)

Jake's view of the war is as unreal as are Polly Morgan's perceptions of life in general. While he learned "Stuka recognition from chewing gum cards" and listened to Churchill's rhetoric on radio, Harry had to sleep in Liverpool station during the blitz (p. 23).

The lawyer for the prosecution at Jake's trial seems to have the opinion that movies have a harmful effect on both the viewers and the makers of them. He says about Harry: "after all, these are permissive days, and everything the prisoner has seen in the so-called adult cinema, or in Soho strip clubs, tells him that he has a right to everything."

(p. 445) And about Jake he says:

> he is so arrogant a man, accustomed to directing fantasies under set conditions, that this time he attempted to carry over into actuality the prerequisites of his trade, he wished to direct real people in x-certificate scenes, as it were. (p. 446)

Although he misjudges Jake, this man is basically right, although completely unsympathetic, in his evaluation of Harry. Still, even in his intransigence the lawyer gives us reason to consider the great influence movies have over us all. However, Duddy Kravitz, in a brief appearance in this novel, gives another view on this matter. He mourns the fact that explicit sex of different varieties in movies is ruining sex for him: "All this new outspokenness in the arts is taking the kicks out of it for me. Gone are the guilty pleasures, the dirty secret joys " (p. 459). Depending on how one views them, the movies can be blamed for anything.

5.3 The car, too, is an indicator of social values. The kind of car (or the lack of one) a character has tells us a great deal about him: there is an important difference between the owner of an Aston-Martin and the owner of a Hillman Minx, and perhaps even more between a car-owner and a pedestrian. There is, also, a special authority and glamour that belongs to the man who rides a horse (a past technology that evokes an older environment and its related social values) instead of a car.

Another type of technology that dominates St. Urbain's Horseman is the car. Almost everyone in the novel owns and drives a car, but there is an important difference between the owner of an Aston-Martin and the owner of a Hillman Minx, and perhaps even more between a car-owner and a pedestrian. Their own perception (and that of others too) of their identity will be different. There is, in addition, a special authority and glamour that belongs to the man who rides a horse instead of a car. Jake is obsessed with his cousin Joey Hersh, the horseman of St. Urbain Street and the avenger of the Jews. Jake considers him to be a hero of an old-fashioned type (even though others see him only as a punk or crook) and always imagines him on a magnificent Pleven stallion in spite of the fact that cars, planes, and other vehicles are more likely modes of modern transport whether one is an avenger or not. Perhaps by imagining Joey on horseback Jake indulges in nostalgia for outmoded technology, a nostalgia that can be an important aspect of pastoralism. Certainly, it is his way of imaginatively setting Joey apart from other people, all of whom drive cars. A man on horseback is a symbol of authority and superiority--"when a Jew gets on a horse he stops being a Jew"--and that is what Jake wants Joey to stand for (p. 463). Jake remembers the last time he saw Joey. He was driving a red MG sports car then, and since he was reported to be a singer in the United States at that time, the car is appropriate to the image he wanted to project at home:

> The day Joey returned his fire-engine red MG looked so lithe and incongruous parked right there on St. Urbain, among the fathers' battered Chevies and coal delivery trucks, off-duty taxis, salesmen's Fords and grocery goods vans--the MG could have been a magnificent stallion and Cousin Joey a knight returned from a foreign crusade. (p. 129)

Even here Jake is fantasizing a personal hero. But Joey's car, however expensive and flashy, is not adequate as a symbol: only a horse will do. Jake finds that the spiritual vacuum in his life needs filling. The signs of success--wife, family, house, garden, car--are not enough so he "creates" Joey, and he places Joey on a horse to answer his own nostalgia for past technology. "Jake craved answers, a revelation, something out there, a certitude," and a man on a horse provides them (p. 302). Joey becomes a kind of "moral editor" for Jake's thoughts and actions (p. 311). Joey, of course, is a real person, but the heroic activities that Jake attributes to him are probably fantasy, a wish-fulfillment. Besides elevating Joey beyond the ordinary by placing him on a horse, Jake also sees his cousin as a master of various other technologies; Joey is mentioned in connection with a car, rifle, gun, motorcycle, plane, and the movies. At the end of the novel Jake finds a gun in Joey's saddle pouch and fires it: "There was a tremendous report, a kick, but to his astonishment, no hole in the wall" (p. 465). The gun is an actor's gun that fires only blanks. Perhaps this device is Richler's way of putting Jake's fantasy in perspective.[10] Joey may be no more than an actor posing as a hero or, more likely an ordinary person made extraordinary by Jake's imagination; but as anyone in theatre or film knows, the pose or illusion or fiction can reveal great truths. The celluloid image can be more real than reality.

The car that Joey drove, as much as the horse that Jake invents for him, tells the reader something about him--but much more about Jake for whom such symbols are important. In general the car is an indication not of moral superiority but of success, status, and personality. There are many examples. Jake's Uncle Abe, a Montreal Q.C., drives a Cadillac. Ormsby-Fletcher, Jake's stuffy English lawyer, drives a black Humber-- a good, expensive car but not flashy, not a "swinger's car." Luke Scott, however, drives "a low-slung, very, very expensive type sports car" (p. 59). He is a successful TV and movie script writer, and he wants his success to show. When Luke achieved his first international success, what impressed him most about how people treated him in New York was the "black cad with a phone inside" that was put to his use (p. 203). Nancy's former boyfriend, Derek Burton, is devoted to his Austin-Healey, and car rallying is one of his hobbies. His car and car accessories tell the reader as much about him as his clothes do (p. 217). Sunday morning softball on Hampstead Heath is a weekly ritual for Jake and other North American expatriates of his acquaintance. Once one of the men "had flown in from Rome, just for the sake of a restorative nine innings" (p. 239). Planes make such extravagances possible, and almost as extravagant are the Aston-Martins, Maseratis, and Mercedes Benzes the other men drive to the park.

At a swinger's party Jake sees that

> a sea of cars surrounded Farber's flat, spilling out of the mews into the road and beyond. There was a Rolls-Royce painted in psychedelic colors, more than one Ferrari, Aston Martins double-parked and too many E-types to count. Jake's Hillman Minx, a shame for the neighbors, had to be abandoned more than a block's distance away. (p. 381)

The importance of the type of car Jake drives as compared to the other much larger, much more expensive cars of his friends, neighbours, and acquaintances cannot be underestimated. The car he has chosen to buy and drive is almost the only outward indication of his integrity; his food, clothes, home, wife, children, and general way of life are very little different from that of these "swingers," but his car is not acceptably luxurious. The Hillman Minx shows that Jake is not at ease with his easily acquired wealth and that his wealth and resulting way of life have not put his conscience to sleep. In addition, Jake doesn't seem to need a car to "prove his manhood" or to prove his worth (p. 153).

One of the things that puts Harry Stein apart from others is that he has no car. Perhaps his problems can be summed up in the word "pedestrian." He lives in "swinging" London, but his life is anything but swinging. Because he works in an accountant's office "fiddling" other people's (the clients are usually in the entertainment business) expense bills for income tax purposes, he knows how well some people live. However, Harry doesn't have access to the luxuries such people take for granted. He has no car and can't afford one; he usually can't even afford taxi-fare. On first meeting Harry, "Jake immediately recognized in him the deprived man seething at the end of the bus queue in the driving rain. As he hurtled past in a taxi" (p. 63). To Harry, who will never own one, a Bentley is the ultimate mark of success. But being a pedestrian, he is out to get revenge on luxury-car owners. The owner-driver of a car has prestige, power, and money; and the car is a sign of his position in society. Harry has nothing and he is bitter. One evening he notices a Silver Cloud Rolls Royce parked on the street: "Drifting past, ostensibly without purpose, Harry opened the knife in his mac pocket and ran it the length of the Rolls, walking on some distance before wheeling around to slash the body paint on the other side" (p. 69). Harry remembers a boat show he attended when he was thirty and realized then that he could never afford a boat even if he saved for ten years: "I was never going to bloody have it. Any of it. No yacht. No MG. No weeks at Monte" (p. 365). He's never going to achieve these marks of success, and he knows that it's not because he lacks intelligence. His revenge that time was to phone a bomb threat to the place where the boat show was held and gloat in satisfaction when he saw the people pour out of the building.

Harry is also bitter about his lack of a "swinging" sex life. Here he takes his bad feelings out on movie stars, the current goddesses, by addressing obscene phone calls to them. He has been doing this for a long time. At the age of twenty-five he developed a passion for a starlet and tormented her with obscene phone calls "culminating in a call that stated if he couldn't enjoy her body, nobody else would" (p. 371). He carried out the threat by tampering with the brakes of her sports car--an idea he got from a Hitchcock movie. Fortunately, the woman wasn't hurt, but Harry was caught and jailed. Another of his current hobbies is photographing nude or semi-nude women. It may be that the "nude [is] his only possible medium for the proper understanding of the play of light on irregular morphic masses," but it is doubtful that this is the reason why Harry has chosen this particular hobby (p. 291). Because most of the men at the studio don't even put film in their cameras, the true nature of the "hobby" (that is, ogling naked women) is made clear. Poor Harry gets his pleasure vicariously-- either through the lens of his camera or through the medium of a magazine photograph. Whereas Jake has a real live "doll," Harry's woman is only a photograph.

5.4 The way a character relates to nature is an important aspect of his personality. Jake enjoys the countryside, but on the whole his attitude toward nature is ambivalent. Duddy in The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz, however, is not ambivalent; for him nature exists only to be exploited for his own material gain. The natural landscape has no positive spiritual force in his life. If he is a "pastoral" character at all, it is because he is outside society, independent of its rules, and thus a kind of social critic.

A character's relation to some technology or other tells a lot about him: so does his attitude toward nature. Perhaps nature doesn't change his consciousness, but the way "an urban rat" relates to it, on the few occasions that he does, is important. To Harry the country is an alien place, a place of evacuation during the war. Jake, however, remembers with fondness the summers of his youth spent away from Montreal --pastoral summers even though the activities in Shawbridge were only a little "outdoorsy" (p. 190). And when he visits Germany, although he remembers the horrors of the Nazi years, he is appreciative of the landscape:

> R.C.A.F. 4 Wing, at Baden-Soellingen, lay in the green and restful Schwarzwald, ringed by mountains that were rich in cool pine trees and crumbling castles, and only fifteen minutes' drive from the elegant spa of Baden-Baden. Spring, Jake had to allow, suited the province splendidly. In the foothills and valleys, the apple and pear and plum trees blossomed. (p. 266)

The car enables those who can afford it to go out and enjoy the beauties of the countryside. Therefore, access to the country is a privilege to be bought. Jake often drives into the country; Harry, of course, never does. Because he owns a car, Jake is able to drive his family into the country where they are described as "cavorting in a meadow, savoring the sun" (p. 304). And again because of the car, the family can spend their summer in Cornwall with Jake playing the part of weekend commuter. On the whole, however, Jake's attitude to nature seems ambivalent. Although he himself lives in "a detached nine-room dwelling, with a walled garden, in the most enviable part of Hampstead," he doesn't seem totally comfortable in such an environment and seems to label that type of environment as "English" or "WASP" (p. 428). For instance, he imagines that the ideal English lawyer (ideal to guide his defence against sex charges) comes "from a detached in an unspoiled village in Surrey . . . where on weekends he tended to the rose bushes and fought off encroaching crabgrass" (p. 178). Ormsby-Fletcher with his floribunda roses, immense pink hydrangeas, luscious dahlias, and climbing red roses on his house satisfies Jake's image (p. 182).

To Jake his own house and garden seem a little alien. When Nancy went house-hunting, she found the "perfect" place. Compared to the tenement dwellings Jake is used to, this Hampstead property seems strange and unappealing: "in the rear . . . there was this seemingly endless unfilled green space. Thick with overgrown and prickly bushes. A stagnant pond buzzing with mosquitoes" (p. 282). But Nancy comes from WASP Ontario and is familiar with creeks, sky, grass, trees, and flowers; and she sees possibilities in this property. Jake sums up her choice of the Hampstead house:

> Immediately, Nancy's goysy Ontario childhood came to the fore, aglow with the memory of granny churning her own ice cream . . . old grandad pricking out beds in the greenhouse. . . . Toronto-liberated mother enthralled to be shovelling pig shit again . . . it's the Ford V-8, Dad come out for the weekend, escaping the incomprehensible city. (p. 282)

Jake sees no redeeming features in the pastoral life, but gradually his wife

> initiated him to the splendors of their cabala, confounding him with talk of herbaceous and mixed borders, biennials and autumn stalwarts.
>
> Appalled, confused, Jake gruffly reminded her that this was alien to him, he had been raised on urban backyards, wherein you dumped punctured tires and watermelon husks and cracked sinks and rotting mattresses. (p. 283)

The garden is alien territory to Jake, but he is determined to impose order on the mess and, in the attempt, overdoes it. He burns leaves that could be used for compost, uproots bushes and peony tubers because he doesn't know what they are. When Nancy points out what he has done, "he retreated to the living room to sulk and study his newly acquired gardening manuals. The Orangeman's Talmud" (p. 283). In his chagrin, he is suggesting that Jews are interested in higher spiritual matters and that WASPs, being deficient in spirituality, put gardening in that top category. But "it was no use. He lacked the touch," and a gardener is hired to help Nancy with the garden (p. 283). This man "immediately sniffed out an urban rat in Jake, somebody who didn't know leaf curl from mildew" and confers with and takes direction only from Nancy (p. 284). Jake is made to feel like an intruder as, "standing by the window, outraged, [he] watched them stroll together through his garden, two bores out of a Thomas Hardy novel, delighting in rustic trivia" (p. 284). But, under supervision, Jake is allowed to weed the garden. For him, though, the garden seems to be little more than a status symbol. Perhaps such an attitude toward nature is an inevitable part of being "an urban rat"-- neither wilderness nor garden provides a suitable habitat for such a creature.

Although The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz was written about fifteen years before St. Urbain's Horseman, it is interesting and instructive to think about Duddy's relationship with the land after we have seen Jake Hersh's bumbling efforts in his Hampstead garden. Jake at least recognizes his limitations, his lack of "touch"; Duddy, however, is not interested in land as a place to grow things. Duddy, like Jake, is more comfortable in the world of urban technologies; he, too, is an urban rat. Richler generalized in A Choice of Enemies that "most Jews are remarkably deficient in a knowledge of nature," and Jake and Duddy certainly qualify to be included in the generalization. However, in The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz Milty Halpirin's mother has a beautiful garden and is considered an amateur horticulturist, but this garden exists in the novel only as a setting for one of Duddy's adolescent pranks.[11] Much more important is Simcha Kravitz's love of gardening. This old man, Duddy's grandfather, is a shoemaker with a shop on St. Dominique Street with living quarters above. Much like Willy Loman in Death of a Salesman, Simcha is devoted to his small garden:

> outside in the gritty hostile soil of his back yard, Simcha planted corn and radishes, peas, carrots, cucumbers. Each year the corn came up scrawnier and the cucumbers yellowed before they ripened, but Simcha persisted with his planting. (p. 45)

However, his love of gardening, of seeing something grow, is not evident in either of his two sons; Benjy becomes the owner of a dress factory and Max drives a taxi. Simcha's highest mark of affection is to present someone with vegetables he has grown himself; and since Benjy has no children, Simcha turns to Max's seven year-old son, Duddy, to teach him the art of gardening. "He took Duddy into the back yard one Sunday morning to teach him how to plant and fertilize and pull out the killing weeds " (p. 47). Because of his love of the land, Simcha considers himself and his sons to be failures and tells Duddy, "A man without land is nobody " (p. 48). It is this statement that inspires in Duddy the dream to own land in the Laurentians--a holiday resort for himself and a farm for his grandfather.

Against this dream is set the reality of the city. One summer Duddy works in his uncle's dress factory in order to save money to buy land. The operators of the sewing machines, mostly French-Canadian women, are rather pathetic creatures:

> The girls punched in each morning at five to nine and by nine a.m. they had all assumed their places by the machines: a tense crouch. At one minute past nine there was a bell, a whirr, the machines began and the girls, taking a deep breath, bent their heads lower over their work. (p. 57)

Fortunately for him, his job doesn't last long, and the summer after he finishes high-school Duddy works at a resort hotel in the Laurentians and finds the land of his dreams. "For Duddy had never forgotten what his grandfather had said: 'A man without land is nobody.' Duddy wanted to be a somebody " (p. 62). Simcha considers himself a failure, and in Duddy's eyes trying to grow a garden in inhospitable soil becomes his image of failure. (Duddy himself is described as a weed early in the novel.)[12] The "small hopeless vegetable patches" in Ste. Agathe's

French-Canadian section remind Duddy of his grandfather's garden, of his grandfather's poor, harsh life and lack of success (p. 92). Duddy is determined to be a winner.

In his mind success is at hand even when Duddy first sees "his" lake:

> Before him spread a still blue lake and on the other side a forest of pine trees. There was not one house on the lake. Some cows grazed on the meadow near the shore and over the next hill there was a cornfield and a silo. There were no other signs of life or ownership or construction. (p. 98)

Duddy wants to own all the land around this beautiful, unspoiled lake in order to be a success and "not a loser." He doesn't want it because of love of land or wilderness. For him it is a possession of certain commercial value. Leaving the land as it is and loving it as it is (whether owning it or not) is not even a possibility that enters Duddy's mind. He swears Yvette to secrecy and immediately starts to purchase parcels of the land. He fears that "the wrong person" will see the lake and buy it; but, of course, it is already evident that Duddy himself is the wrong person (p. 101).

Duddy becomes obsessed with acquiring the land. "He read enviously about the real estate boom in Toronto and of men who had bought land as farms and sold it at twenty to thirty cents a square foot two months later" (p. 112). He has almost no feeling at all for the land or even for scenery; when he goes to the Calder house in Westmount his reaction to the location is "what a site for a restaurant" (p. 170). It is apparent that his concern is with the money he can make from owning a piece of valuable property. His recurrent nightmare consists of "bulldozers, somebody else's surveyors, carpenters and plumbers roar[ing] and hammer[ing] and shout[ing] over the land round Lac St Pierre" (p. 127). And after Virgil's accident on the highway an added element in his nightmare is that "he saw himself horribly mutilated in a road accident" (p. 255). It never occurs to Duddy that greed is mutilating his relationship with people and nature. He visits the lake often in order to see that "the wrong person" has not discovered this paradise. Once in winter

> Duddy got into the car and drove as near as he could to Lac St Pierre. He had to walk the last three-quarters of a mile through deep snow. . . . it gave him quite a lift to see his land in winter. . . . Duddy saw where he would put up the hotel and decided that he would not have to clear the wood all in one shot. It's lovely, he thought, and lots of those pine trees I can peddle at Christmas-time. (p. 212)

Even here when the winter scene gives Duddy "quite a lift," the best he can do to describe it is to use the word "lovely." And again money is of prime concern. Nature, however, almost has its revenge on him for his sacrilege. It starts snowing and Duddy gets lost in the dark. "He began to think what in the hell am I doing lost in a blizzard, a Jewish boy?" (p. 212). However, Duddy wins against nature and against man (his most evident opponent is Dingleman) and gets all the land.

Duddy's father has little sympathy with him, and when he sees the Lac St Pierre property, he tells Duddy that the pastoral life is not for him:

> You're beginning to sound like a real dumb farmer . . . What's so special about trees? . . . I know all about the country. Ants and mosquitoes and skunks and--if you've got the appetite--bull-pies all over. You can have it, buster. (p. 307)

To Max this is wilderness, and he wants no part of it. However, Duddy's resort might end up looking like one of those Richler visited in the

Catskills where everything is under glass. Perhaps that would please Max more. With Duddy in charge the wilderness has no chance; he plans to build a whole town beside the lake--a camp for children, a hotel, cottages, stores, synagogue, a shul, and a movie theatre. Duddy has acquired the land by dishonest means and tries to justify his misdeeds to Yvette in a way that sounds familiar: "you are looking at the man who is going to build a town where only bugs and bullshit was before. I'm going to create jobs. Jeez, I'm a public benefactor" (p. 314). If destruction of farmland and wilderness is considered improvement, Duddy is a public benefactor; if not, he can be seen as a public menace.

After learning about the means Duddy used to get the land, Simcha refuses to accept the farm that Duddy offers him (p. 312). Because of Duddy's dishonesty, Simcha is right in making this gesture.[13] However, there is no indication in the novel that we should judge Simcha himself as being partly to blame for what Duddy has become. Richler seems to offer the old man as an unquestioned moral authority, but surely when Simcha proposed to the seven year-old Duddy that "a man without land is nobody," the novelist should have indicated the moral vacuity of such a statement taken as it stands. A man with land can be a nobody, too: it depends on the man, not on what he owns. Simcha's love for his small garden shows that land in his hands would probably be treated with respect. His emphasis on the ownership of land, however, rather than on its use, provides Duddy with negative guidance in life. It is ironic that Duddy receives the worst advice from the person who cares for him most.

Although it is difficult to be completely sympathetic to Duddy because of the gravity of his misdeeds, it is also impossible to condemn him utterly. He is like the "criminal hero" who is sometimes found in pastoral literature and whose actions serve as a criticism of his society. Writing about "proletarian literature," William Empson says:

> The realistic sort of pastoral . . . also gives a natural expression for a sense of social injustice. So far as the person described is outside society because too poor for its benefits he is independent, as the artist claims to be, and can be a critic of society; so far as he is forced by this into crime he is the judge of the society that judges him. This is a source of irony both against him and against the society.[14]

Duddy does play such an ironic double role; he is judged, and his actions pass judgement on his society. As an outsider wanting to get inside and be accepted, he adopts his society's values with a vengeance. No one actually forces him to be a "criminal"; and yet his status as an outsider, his vitality and independent spirit make "crime" one of the few avenues of enterprise open to him. And it is evident in the novel that his life of "crime" is not much different from the lives of the successful and respectable businessmen that he meets; this irony informs the book.

5.5 *Pastoralism as nostalgia for the Montreal of the past (the older, urban environment) and for its outmoded technologies exists in some of Richler's novels and essays. In addition, he criticizes the excesses of technology and urbanization that have done so much to change the city of his childhood that is the object of his nostalgia.*

In Mordecai Richler's work the term pastoral is not entirely suitable if one takes it to mean only a desire to leave the complexities of city life and return to the country or to the wilderness. In the context of his novels and essays, however, pastoralism is evident if one extends the meaning of the term to include nostalgia for the seemingly simpler life in the city of the past.[15] For instance, In Son of a Smaller Hero once Noah Adler has left home to drive a taxi and be free to live his own life, he thinks back: "Seen from a distance, it seemed full of tender possibilities, anachronistic but beautiful" even though he had hated living at home and had found it stifling (p. 29). But he knows that he can't go back. He says as much to his paternal grandfather who wants to turn time back and live the Jewish life as it was when he was young: "You can't go back, Zeyda. It would be easy if you could" (p. 38). Nostalgia for the past afflicts Noah's other grandfather as well. This man was a poet, and "everybody had read his wild, yearning poems written in Yiddish that had celebrated fields and forests that he had never known" (p. 29). Nostalgia for something not experienced first hand is the essence of "literary" pastoralism. Perhaps Dingleman, of all people, is correct in his comments about this type of poetry and about Duddy's grandfather's desire for land:

> Sitting in their dark cramped ghetto corners they wrote the most mawkish, school-girlish stuff about green fields and sky. Terrible poetry, but touching when you consider the circumstances under which it was written. Your grandfather doesn't want any land. He wouldn't know what to do with it. . . . They want to die in the same suffocating way they lived, bent over a last or a cutting table or a freezing junk yard shack. (p. 310)

At that time perhaps the nostalgia was only for green fields and sky. Now there is that type of nostalgia, but there is also nostalgia for the lasts, cutting tables, and junk yards of the past; and it is this second type of nostalgia that is occasionally found in Richler's work and provides the foundation for urban pastoralism.

Nostalgia for past technologies is very much in evidence in the movie The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz--much more than in the novel. This is probably because when Richler wrote the novel in 1959 the experience of growing up in Montreal was not sufficiently distanced to allow for nostalgia; but when the movie was made in 1973, the people who made it were reconstructing out of their nostalgia the Montreal of their adolescence. For instance, great care was taken to use cars of the right period to be driven by various characters in the movie and to line the streets. The camera lovingly glances over them, especially at the beginning of the movie, in a way that a novel cannot do. In the novel, however, there is one instance where Max Kravitz shows nostalgia for the Montreal of his youth. He tells his son:

> Montreal wasn't what it is now, you know. . . . I remember when the snow in winter was often piled higher than a man on the streets. There was a time back there when they had horses to pull the streetcars. . . . Look at you . . . eighteen years old and driving a car of your own already. My father never even bought me a bicycle. (pp. 129-30)

To Max, Duddy seems underprivileged not to have experienced horse-drawn streetcars but overprivileged to have a car at eighteen.

The focus of Richler's novels and essays has remained relatively constant: Montreal as he remembers it to have been during his youth. However, over two decades have passed since then, and whatever changes have taken place have occurred largely in his absence and without him experiencing them. (He has recently returned to live in Montreal, and his writing about the city will, perhaps, be different once it is based on present experience rather than on memory of the past.) All his accounts of the landscape of his youth, therefore, have a nostalgic quality because the city has changed while his memories of it have not. The passing of time is indicated largely by the changes in technology and the changes that technology effects on the remembered landscape. Richler's journalistic accounts of Montreal tend to have the quality of nostalgia for past technologies that old photographs have. On one occasion after thirteen years away from Montreal, he returns and sees that high-rise apartment buildings and skyscrapers have sprung up, the metro and express highways have been built. He indulges in memories of what used to be: "In the early forties, when I was a boy in Montreal, St. Helen's Island was the untamed and gritty place to which working-class kids escaped for picnics and swims on sweltering summer days" (Hunting Tigers Under Glass, p. 39). Now St. Helen's Island is part of the Expo site and never again can be used as a kind of pastoral retreat by working-class kids. The neighbourhood that Richler remembers from his childhood exists no longer:

> If, for many years, the choice open to me . . . was whether to suffer home or remain an expatriate, the truth quite simply is that the choice no longer exists. Home has been pulverized, bulldozed and spilled into the St. Lawrence to create an artificial island. (Hunting Tigers Under Glass, p. 36)

Technology has erased his childhood environment to provide a site for pavilions built to celebrate old and new technologies (old movies, new movies, spacecraft, computers, etc.).

In The Street, "stories and memoirs" collected nineteen years after he left Montreal, Richler again mentions that the places he knew in the city have been bulldozed away and shows nostalgia for his childhood and the city as it was then.[16] He notices, however, that although the sons and daughters have moved to the promised land of the suburbs, the grandparents (the first generation immigrants) cling to the place they know and exhibit a nostalgia for the way things used to be when they were younger. Perhaps, like the American novelists Richler comments on in Hunting Tigers Under Glass, these people too "are inclined to look back on the days of tenement poverty with nostalgia" (p. 122). Nostalgia apparently does not preclude the unpleasant. This is again noticeable in the comparison Richler makes between the Jewish and Gentile Laurentian summer retreats. The natural landscape on the Jewish side of the mountain is not pleasant; there is stiff, tall grass at the foot of the mountain and marshy patches with bullrushes. Their beach consists of spiky grass and tree stumps. Refuse is strewn about, and the river is polluted and considered a polio hazard. The Gentiles seem to have the better side of the mountain; the foliage is thicker and their beach is a real beach. Richler has his narrator comment, "Everything was so clean. Beautiful, almost." (The Street, p. 67) Both pastoral retreats are extensions of the way the two groups live in the city: neither favours a sojourn in the untouched wilderness. But, however makeshift the Jewish resort, Richler seems to remember it with fondness--probably because it is part of his childhood.

At least when Richler was a boy and took his vacations in the Laurentians, he could have as much of nature as he wanted. The resort in Shawbridge was rather primitive as far as resorts go, but at least everything wasn't under glass as he later finds in the Catskills resorts he visits and reports on in Hunting Tigers Under Glass. Presumably most of the people have come from New York or other large cities and want to escape the city, but they certainly don't get any "country" at these resorts. There are indoor pools, indoor ice-skating rinks, buildings connected by glassed-in or underground passages: "True, they have not yet poured concrete into the natural lakes to build artificial filtered pools above, but, short of that, every new convenience conspires to protect guests from the countryside" (p. 130). The owner of one of the resorts once asked Zero Mostel what else could be added to the resort which seemed to have everything. The reply: "An indoor jungle . . .

Hunting for tigers under glass" (p. 138). It is the aim of this owner "to give them [the guests] city living in the country . . . Look at it this way. Everybody has the sun. Where do we go from there?" (pp. 138-39). He has even gone so far as to install a machine "to spew artificial and multi-coloured snow on the ski runs" (p. 139). Apparently untouched nature is not appealing enough. Only one of the hotels Richler visits is actually on a lake, but even here there are indoor and outdoor pools. The owner of this one admits, "Today nobody lives like it's the mountains" (p. 142). There is no indication anywhere that Richler is a romantic pastoralist in regard to nature, but it is clear from his description of two incidents he saw while visiting the Catskills that bringing the city into the country can go too far:

> As I left the Laurels I actually saw a young couple lying under a sun lamp by the heated indoor pool on a day that was nice enough for swimming in the lake outside the picture window.
>
> At Brown's . . . a considerable number of guests ignored the endless run of facilities to sit on the balcony that overlooked the highway and watch the cars go by, the people come and go. Obviously, there's still nothing like the front-door stoop. (p. 142)

These passages, taken together with the satire against the excesses of technology in Cocksure, make it clear that Richler recognizes that the benefits of technology and urbanization are not limitless. On the other hand, he does not romanticize nature and its effects on people. As a satirist and moralist he wants to open our eyes to the world, now largely urban, as it is. If he presses the reader to take sides, it is not a pressure exerted to make one take sides with either nature or technology but rather with those who see the world clearly as opposed to those who choose to remain blind. Even regarding childhood, a time of life about which it is difficult to be objective, Richler is neither sentimental nor romantic. In a magazine article he explains the essence of his type of pastoralism, a state of mind with which most readers will be familiar:

> The Main's no esthetic treasure. There will be no outcry from historical societies when the inevitable bulldozers move in to demolish and widen. But I, for one, will miss it sorely. Not, mind you, because I'm sentimental about poverty. . . . If I cherish some memories of the Main . . . I can still recall the children with rickets . . . These were certainly not the good old days. I wouldn't, I'm sure, choose to be a child on the Main again, but I can remember it fondly now because it was, after all, the harsh wonderland of my childhood.[17]

Although harsh, his childhood, simply because it was childhood and is now finished with except in memory, was a wonderland; and perhaps no matter how much technology modifies the place of his childhood and his present consciousness, that time of his life will always remain a time of wonder.

These examples from Richler's work indicate that the nature of the perfect pastoral retreat is gradually changing and will change even more in the future. It will shift to the cities even though a large measure of romantic primitivism will continue to exist. The roots of many Canadian writers now writing have been in the country or small town. Alice Munro's roots, for instance, were in a western Ontario town, and she says, "maybe as a writer I'm a kind of anachronism. . . . because I write about places where your roots are and most people don't live that kind of life anymore at all."[18] Perhaps the day of country or small town rootedness is over, but the alternative need not be complete rootlessness. (Clark Blaise's name comes to mind as one writer who is concerned about the lack of childhood roots.) Roots can be established in cities, and probably more Canadian writers in the future will have childhood memories of growing up in the city. No longer do boys (and girls) in Canadian literature need the bald-headed-prairies or the Annapolis Valley in which to grow up and nourish memories; they can develop the "pastoral quality of mind"[19] in large cities. Raymond Williams comments on pastoralism as a mode of thought that can emerge as well from urban centres as from the country:

> often an idea of the country is an idea of childhood . . . and we have seen how often it is then converted into illusory ideas of the rural past . . . But what is interesting now is that we have had enough stories and memories of urban childhoods [in the British Isles] to perceive the same pattern.[20]

The key to such pastoralism is the memories of the superseded technology that informs a large part of the memories of childhood; and Richler provides an insight into this type of pastoral literature that, most likely, will become more common in the future.

CHAPTER VI

LEONARD COHEN

At first Leonard Cohen's two novels, The Favourite Game and Beautiful Losers, appear to be romantic pastorals. Cohen seems to be on the side of the natural man as Kroetsch is and against the technological man as Atwood's narrators are. A writer of romantic pastoral would favour what Cohen calls Magic (which could be seen as the older environment and related technologies) over what he calls System (new technologies and related values). But Cohen's identity as a writer of romantic pastoral is questionable. If, in fact, he presents art and the artistic process as "a kind of balance" between Magic and System, his work would resemble classical pastoral more than romantic pastoral. However, Beautiful Losers is written in the ironic mode--a mode that uses pastoral features in a way that is different from satire and simple pastoralism. Cohen can be seen as being against dividing human nature and the world into twos and then insisting on a choice or a reconciliation between dualities. His "vision of All Chances at Once" is a vision that precludes having any hierarchy of values (an essential feature of pastoral and satire) at all and, hence, is not pastoral.

6.1 Sometimes technology has a negative and nature a positive connotation in The Favourite Game *as one would expect in romantic pastoral literature. However, there are some positive images of technology in the novel so the final impression is one of ambivalence toward technology. Although containing pastoral elements, this novel is not a pastoral in the McLuhan sense of the word because new technology does not turn a past environment into an art form. Art itself, rather than nature or technology, has the greatest value and perhaps incorporates everything else into itself. This emphasis on art seems to make* The Favourite Game *akin to classical pastoral.*

In both The Favourite Game and Beautiful Losers there are examples of technology as a negative force and the natural world (sex, Indians, mystical religion, for instance) as positive. If a reader sees only these features, he or she will conclude that the novels are romantic pastorals. However, Leonard Cohen's emphasis on art and the artistic process tends to make them pastorals of the classical type. If art and the artistic process include both the natural and the technological--the natural in the sense of the spontaneous, the instinctive, the free, and the technological in the sense of the patterned or systematized, the thoughtfully planned, the organized into an art form--and Cohen can be seen to be an advocate of "balance" through art, then his fiction verges on being classical pastoral literature. His epiphanies of the artistic process do not consist of a hundred naked ladies dancing in free and yet measured steps, but each of his novels does contain an epiphany or symbolic event which shows, to some extent, the place that art has as "a kind of balance" between nature and technology or, as he calls them, Magic and System. Beautiful Losers is the more important of Cohen's two novels in this regard, but The Favourite Game can be seen as a valuable introduction to the other novel. There could possibly be a third way of looking at Beautiful Losers, however. Cohen could be denying the existence of a hierarchy of values (a hierarchy that is essential in pastoral and satire) and using his ironic vision to undercut the pastoral features in the novel to the point where they cease being pastoral.

Cohen's first novel, The Favourite Game, opens with flashbacks to Lawrence Breavman's childhood, one that seems privileged and yet spoiled by the somewhat sinister presence of his father. The sinister aspects of the father are connected with technology; his wealth comes from owning a factory, and while Breavman is still a young boy, his father lies dying from the effects of his participation in World War I. But in spite of his physical condition, it seems vital to the father that he be reminded of the fact that "he was once a warrior."[1] A .38 pistol kept by his bed serves this purpose:

> Lethal, angular, precise, it smouldered in the dark drawer with dangerous potential. The metal was always cold.
>
> The sound of the machinery when Breavman pulled the hammer back was the marvellous sound of all murderous scientific achievement. Click! like the smacking of cogwheel lips. (p. 19)

The presence of such a "murderous scientific" instrument tells a great deal about the father's values but perhaps even more about Breavman, now the adult writer, and his antipathy to technology.

Looking back, Breavman saw that his father was an "enemy" against whom he rebelled early in his life. He says about his father, "what he really loved was machinery. He would go miles to see a machine which cut a pipe this way instead of that" (p. 20). His attitude to nature seems to be that knowledge of it is better than ignorance, and he gives his son books on How to tell Birds, Trees, Insects, and Stones (p. 20). In the meantime his own leather-bound books of poetry have never been read. Breavman takes out his hatred of his father and his values on the scientific "how to" books:

> He tore the books as his father weakened. He didn't know why he hated the careful diagrams and coloured plates. We do. It was to scorn the world of detail, information, precision, all the false knowledge which cannot intrude on decay. (p. 21)[2]

To the young boy it probably seemed inconceivable that science could not save a man who believed so strongly in it. Later he sees his father as "double-natured and arbitrary. He is the persecuted brother, the near poet, the innocent of the machine toys" (p. 25). In typical romantic fashion Breavman chooses half of the double nature to perfect in himself and sets out to become a poet. Seeing the world as composed of such a dichotomy (science and poetry, in this case) and assuming that a choice must be made between the two parts is characteristic of a romantic, and Lawrence Breavman is a very romantic young man.

He has a rather Wordsworthian concept of childhood and nature:

> Seven to eleven is a huge chunk of life, full of dulling and forgetting. It is fabled that we slowly lose the gift of speech with animals, that birds no longer visit our windowsills to converse. As our eyes grow accustomed to sights they armour themselves against wonder. Flowers once the size of pine trees, return to clay pots. Even terror diminishes. (p. 28)

As a contrast to his vision of the Allan hospital as the heart of the city--the hospital "with drugs and electricity . . . the hospital was the true heart, pumping stability and erections and orgasms and sleep into all the withering commercial limbs"--is his earlier vision of the park on Mount Royal: "The park nourished all the sleepers in the surrounding houses. It was the green heart. . . . It was the best part of everyone's life (p. 222, pp. 66-67). Nature is necessary to nourish the imagination; and especially for urban dwellers who can be starved of such nourishment, it can be very important. Evil, for Breavman, is destruction of nature; he considers his most evil act to be the dissecting of a living frog at the foot of the War Memorial on Dorchester Street (p. 62).

When he is about seventeen, Breavman takes up with Norma, a Young Communist, and they do political work aimed at informing people about the nuclear threat. What politics means to him is not rhetoric and vague theory but the actual physical danger that individual people are in. As he collects signatures on a petition he tells people:

> "I'm not talking about Russia or America. I'm not even talking about politics. I'm talking about your bodies, the ones stretched out on this beach . . . I'm talking about bodies, which are all we have, and no government can restore one finger, one tooth, one inch of normal skin that is lost because of the poison in the air. . . ." (p. 72)

After awhile Breavman decides that "Nothing could help the air"; his work against nuclear pollution is not effective, and his saving of lips that can kiss and bodies that can be touched by love takes a different form (p. 75). He turns to sex and poetry as his way of changing people or saving them from destructive systems--again a decision that characterizes him as a hero of romantic pastoral since love-making and poetry-writing are two activities favoured by characters in such literature. Breavman says, "I want to touch people like a magician, to change them or hurt them, leave my brand, make them beautiful" (p. 101).

In spite of Breavman's commitment to nature, however, we are inclined to view him and his identity as natural man with some scepticism. Cohen uses a narrative technique that is based on motion picture technique and frequently chooses technological images to describe his protagonist. This association of the natural man and poet with technology gives the novel an ironic resonance.

First of all, the narrative technique that Cohen has chosen for The Favourite Game encourages the reader to see Breavman as an excessively backward-looking, self-dramatizing young man. His mind is the camera as he remembers the scenes in the present. Movies, or mind as movie, preserve the past for the present. Perhaps one could even say that Breavman has been so influenced by movies that he, like Richler's Polly Morgan, has come to think of his own life as a movie. Michael Ondaatje describes the cinematic technique of Cohen's novel:

> The most obvious quality in the style and technique of The Favourite Game is its visual or cinematic style. Each chapter is a scene, and the feeling one gets in reading the novel is not so much an insight into a character as a vision of Breavman in different poses, playing the lead in several movies. . . . We get to see only the perfect photographic image, and this is why the book appears so romantic. It is Breavman the romantic artist who connects these images . . . [the novel] is a lyric where everyone is seen in their [his or her] "condition of highest beauty." Chapters or scenes end dramatically or enigmatically in a style that is excessively cinematic.[3]

Breavman's double function as actor in the movie which is his life and as audience for that movie is interesting in itself and provides an image for the alienation he feels from other people and, more importantly, for the distance he puts between different segments of his life. Flashbacks enable bodies to grow young again and memories to remain fresh; they also give the reader the impression that Breavman has never grown up.[4]

Second, the images of technology that Cohen chooses to describe Breavman tell us a great deal about him and about his relationship with other people. For instance, the quality of the relationship between Tamara and Breavman is indicated by the artificial light that shines on them:

> The city had installed modern fluorescent street-lamps on Stanley, which case a ghostly yellow light. Shining through the blue and green Victorian glass the result was intense artificial moonlight and the flesh of any woman looked fresh and out-of-doors. (p. 87)

They are cruel to each other but keep "returning to the bed on Stanley Street and the strange light which seemed to repair the innocence of their bodies" (p. 88). Their innocence is as artificial as the fake moonlight that streams over their bodies. Breavman finds it difficult to overcome his alienation and be close to anyone, even those with whom he is physically intimate. His emotional distance from Patricia, for instance, is indicated by the image used to describe her: "He listened to her breathing. It was like the delicate engine of some cruel machine spreading distance after distance between them" (p. 219). Clearly, the distance between Breavman and other people is mostly his fault, and the alienation he feels is suggested by the technological images he uses to describe his feelings.

Also, the most memorable single moment in his young life depends not on poetry or sex or nature but on technology. He and his friend, Krantz, escape from the city and civilization into the country in a speeding car. Through speed they annihilate history, geography, human values, and time:

> Moving at that speed they were not bound to anything. They could sample all the possibilities. They flashed by trees that took a hundred years to grow. They tore through towns where men lived their whole lives. They knew the land was old, the mountains the most ancient on earth. They covered it all at eighty miles an hour.
>
> There was something disdainful in their speed, disdainful of the eons it took the mountains to smooth out, of the generations of muscle which had cleared the fields, of the labour which had gone into the modern road they rolled on. They were aware of the disdain. The barbarians must have ridden Roman highways with the same feeling. We have the power now. Who cares what went before? (p. 94)

Their sense of power and escape depends on a speeding car, and these modern barbarians seem to realize the combined irresponsibility and joy of it: "there was something frightened in their speed. . . . They were flying from their majority . . . [from] the real and vicious circumcision which society was hovering to inflict through limits and dull routine" (p. 95). Breavman would rather go on for ever like this than have to face fifty more years of "achievement and failure" (p. 96). In a speeding car he is in a kind of limbo, almost a kind of island separate from ordinary time and place and serving as a pastoral retreat. The opportunities for achievement and failure are left behind; here he is not expected to write poetry, to have relationships with women, or to affect the world at all. There is nothing here except remembering the good moments of his past life and listening to the car radio. For Breavman this is the perfect moment: "everything is poised in perfection for the quick freeze, the eternal case in the astral museum" (p. 98). This is the perfect escape from the ordinary world, and here technology makes it possible. It is only because of the speeding car (and other technologies) that an older environment can be turned into a kind of art, that is, the perfect moment frozen for all time.

Against Breavman's ambivalent attitude toward technology Cohen places the importance of physical beauty and art. He has Breavman think of the women he has known:

> They were the only beauty, the last magic. Breavman knew what he knew, that their bodies never died. Everything else was fiction. It was the beauty they carried. He remembered them all, there was nothing lost. To serve them. His mind sang praise. (p. 221)

To serve their beauty and their individuality Breavman (and Cohen) writes poetry. The physical is served by and preserved in art. Such an idea can, of course, lead the poet to justify excesses of all sorts in the name of art. Nevertheless, in this novel art is the greatest good against which everything else is measured. Art is the "favourite game":[5]

> After a heavy snow we would go into a back yard with a few of our friends. The expanse of snow would be white and unbroken. . . . you circled her [Bertha, the spinner] until your feet left the ground. Then she let go and you flew over the snow. You remained still in whatever position you landed. . . . You stood up carefully, taking great pains not to disturb the impression you had made. Now the comparisons. Of course you would have done your best to land in some crazy position, arms and legs sticking out. Then we walked away, leaving a lovely white field of blossom-like shapes with footprint stems. (p. 223)

This is Cohen's epiphany of the artistic process. Simple as they are, this favourite game has rules. A circle is a form, and Bertha, the artist, makes the performers stay within that form. Even though the final creation of the flowers on the snow has the appearance of being completely free and spontaneous, it has freedom and spontaneity only as constrained or guided by a pattern-maker. On the field of snow are shapes that are not, by and large, accidental. Nature and technique (the human patterning processes) come together here to make art.

This favourite game is a child's game remembered by an adult: hence, an air of nostalgia for childhood that can be an important part of pastoralism. At a time when his life and art are not going well, Breavman seeks consolation in a happy memory of the past; however, his nostalgia is not for superseded technology so this novel is not a pastoral as defined by McLuhan. And even though The Favourite Game has some elements of romantic pastoralism, the final impression of the novel is that it is akin to classical pastoral in its emphasis on a balance between nature and technique in art.

6.2 The two male characters of Beautiful Losers (F. and the narrator) can be seen as protagonists in a romantic pastoral. Each sees the world in terms of dualities and choices and has a dual nature. F., a man of technology, paradoxically speaks for Magic and against System. The narrator, a historian, wants to escape time and history through sex, especially through sexual obsession with the long-dead Catherine Tekakwitha. The Indians are associated with Magic and the white people with System. The idealization by the narrator of the past environment of the Indians is an example of romantic pastoral ideology, as is the choice of sex as a metaphor of freedom.

In Cohen's more complex second novel, Beautiful Losers, the values he holds are harder to discover, especially since the obscurity of the book has led to various interpretations that attempt to clarify but do more to mystify. The novel can be considered as a romantic pastoral or a classical pastoral, but a third possibility is that it is a work of irony. As F. says, "A diet of paradox fattens the ironist not the psalmist,"[6] and Beautiful Losers is full of paradox. Although Cohen contrasts two sets of values (environments), a situation that is essential in pastoral (the simplest and clearest example is Drew's The Wabeno Feast) and in satire (as in Simpson's work), he chooses a third response: the ironic. Irony can be a feature of complex pastoralism as in Surfacing where a hierarchy of values exists, but here in Cohen's novel the ironic vision denies the existence of such a hierarchy.

Starting with the title, the novel is full of irony and paradox, and perhaps the most profitable reading of the novel is one that emphasizes Cohen's ironic treatment of sex and religion. The mistake would be to see that what he says about these human activities is a psalm of praise. Only careful reading will ensure that what seems to be an attack against System (that is, rationality, new technology, and science) will not automatically be interpreted as a celebration of Magic (that is, the non-rational, the past environment, and nature); the book is too complex for such a simplistic either/or choice to work. In Drew's The Wabeno Feast MacKay, referring to Aurelius, says at one point, "If a man were sane his every action would be in accord both with Nature and with reason" to which the Indian chief replies, "If a man were sane . . . he would have no need to reconcile these two!" (p. 257). In Beautiful Losers Cohen seems to take the position that there is no need to choose between or reconcile false dualities. Rather than the Greek frame of mind (dominant in Western civilization) which depends on dualities and polarities set against each other to enable a choice of the "right" one, Cohen might be working within a kind of Hebrew dialectical framework where all possibilities co-exist on an equal footing and synthesis rather than choice is the goal: "a vision of All Chances At Once" (p. 305). If this is the case--if all activities are one and there is no hierarchy of values, the whole pastoral framework breaks down since pastoralism depends on something (for example, superseded technology, the natural landscape, childhood) being better than some other things (new technology, the city, life as an adult, etc.)--one could say that the ironic response uses the pastoral pattern and discards it. However, examining such a response is valuable because it increases one's understanding of pastoralism and makes clear things in Cohen's novel that otherwise remain obscure.

The two main characters of Beautiful Losers can be seen as protagonists in a romantic pastoral. Each sees the world in terms of dualities and choices and has a dual nature. For instance, F., paradoxically, seems to be a technological man who speaks out against System and in favour of Magic. Although the narrator calls him "another victim of the system," F. seems very much at home in the system and with technology (p. 59).[7] Together F. and the narrator listen to news of disasters on radio. F. seems to equate movies with civilization, and the narrator remembers with fondness the times they had together, "the ladders we climbed and the happy views of simple human clockwork" (p. 16). F.'s sneezes are "high-pitched and metallic, positively instrumental," and he loves to think and orate against mechanical noises or the sounds from a radio: "Suddenly F. threw a switch, the lights flickered, and the central power belt which drove the sewing machines began to roll. F. began to orate. He loved to talk against mechanical noise" (p. 58, p. 52). The most exciting moment the two men share is the high-speed drive to Ottawa during which they stimulate themselves with the "mechanical ecstasy" of masturbation: "Thus we existed in some eye for a second: two men in a hurtling steel shell aimed at Ottawa, blinded by a mechanical mounting ecstasy" (p. 118). F.'s non-sexual pleasures are equally strange. He buys the factory in which he worked as a boy and is "deeply moved by his ownership" (p. 52). F. says that he bought the factory to turn it into a playground and predicts that sometime in the future rich men will want factories instead of landscaped gardens or fake ruins as a place for leisure enjoyment: "Isn't this a beautiful place?" F. exclaims. "Isn't it peaceful? We're standing in the future. Soon rich men will build places like this on their estates and visit them by moonlight" (p. 53). F. plans to come in and "sweep a little" and "play with the machines" (p. 53). Clearly, the nostalgia for childhood of this technological man is inextricably bound up with nostalgia for past technologies.

Even though his life is governed by systems as much as are the lives of the other characters, F. is constantly voicing his opinions against System. As a contrast to E. M. Forster's dictum, "Only Connect,"

F. says, "Connect nothing": attempt no "fake universal comprehension" (p. 20). The narrator wants "a comforting message, a beautiful knowledge of unity," as we all do (p. 21). His mind wants to connect "all the disparates of the world . . . everything which has existed and does exist, we are part of a necklace of incomparable beauty and unmeaning" (p. 21). To connect would be to acquire meaning, we think; one of the most important characteristics of the human animal is his ability to make generalizations, to formulate theories and systems. The narrator recalls that F. once said, "Science begins in coarse naming, a willingness to disregard the particular shape and destiny of each red life, and call them all Rose" (p. 21). Such coarse naming is essential for the establishment of connections and systems, of science, as F. points out. The celebration of particularity perhaps is the function of art or, to be more accurate, some types of art. F. objects to science and systems and talks like an artist: "Connect nothing . . . Place things side by side . . . if you must, but connect nothing! . . . Don't be fooled" (p. 21).

F.'s disdain for the rational, system-making mind culminates in his long letter to the narrator which he writes from a hospital for the criminally insane. F. hopes that he can serve as an Oscotarach (the Head-Piercer of Iroquois myth)[8] to pierce his friend's head, teach him the importance of the non-rational, and prepare him for immortality (p. 232). Five years after F.'s death, the narrator reads the letter in which F. attempts to tell his friend everything he knows. To F., man's achievements are "like the bubbles above a clam" (p. 185). He sums up our civilization: "the roofs are raised against the storm. . . . the forests are cleared so the wind will not rattle the trees. . . . the hydrogen rockets go off to silence dissent and variety" (p. 185). As an adherent of the pastoral ideology F. believes that the destruction of nature by technology has not led to anything good:

> Now what about this silence we are so desperate to clear in the wilderness? Have we labored, plowed, muzzled, fenced so that we might hear a Voice? Fat chance. The Voice comes out of the whirlwind, and long ago we hushed the whirlwind. I wish that you would remember that the Voice comes out of the whirlwind. Some men, some of the time, have remembered. (p. 186)

F. is against systems, but he admits at the end, "Times I felt depleted: you with all that torment, me with nothing but a System" (p. 191). "It was I who feared the rational mind, therefore I tried to make you a little mad" (p. 190). To oppose System,F. proclaims the power of Magic.

The well-known message begins: "God is alive. Magic is afoot. God is alive. Magic is afoot. God is afoot. Magic is alive. Alive is afoot. Magic never died. God never sickened. . . . Magic always ruled" (pp. 197-98). God and Magic, he says, are alive although rumoured to be dead. The heart of man doesn't believe the rumour and needs God and Magic for sustenance. This message is for the weak and for the strong, for everyone. It is even for those who denied God and Magic or lied about them. Laws and parliamentary legislation have no power in comparison to God and Magic. "Magic is afoot. It cannot come to harm. It rests in an empty palm. It spawns in an empty mind. But Magic is no instrument. Magic is the end" (p. 198). Magic is the goal, not the means to the goal, not the technology. Maybe God and Magic reside in nature:

> Though mountains danced before them they said that God was dead. Though his shrouds were hoisted the naked God did live. This I mean to whisper to my mind. This I mean to laugh with in my mind. This I mean my mind to serve till service is but Magic moving through the world, and mind itself is Magic coursing through the flesh, and flesh itself is Magic dancing on a clock, and time itself the Magic Length of God. (p. 199)

The "I" is distinct from the mind, but what the "I" is, is not clear. Once the message is given, the mind is to serve Magic in order to increase the influence of Magic throughout the world. Such service will make the mind itself become Magic and become united with the body, thus erasing the dichotomy between them. The fusion of mind and body through Magic is a celebration of finite or earthly time, and such celebration raises finite time to the level of eternal time and a sharing of the essence of God. It seems that F. is suggesting that the rational mind is the enemy of such fusion and must give way to the non-rational. Most likely it is from this passage about Magic that the reading of *Beautiful Losers* as a psalm celebrating the instinctual and the natural over the rational and the civilized is derived.

Like a hero of pastoral, the nameless narrator of *Beautiful Losers* faces choices in his life, and like such a hero what he wants more than anything else is to escape from his constipated, sedentary life.[9] He wants Magic in his life. At the beginning of the novel he lives in the sub-basement of an apartment building; his rooms have no windows, and he has to use a sunlamp to get a tan. His body is a machine that doesn't work well and his life is a mess: "Is it any wonder I have sent my heart out into the birch trees? Is it any wonder that an old scholar who never made much money wants to climb into your [Catherine's] Technicolor postcard?" he asks (p. 4). The narrator wants as little to do with the actual as possible. He wants to escape, or as he ways, he wants "to move out" of himself (p. 6). As a scholar who is an authority on the A_____ tribe of which only ten remain in the 1950's, the time when he is doing his research, his life is focussed on the past, but he wants to break out of time and history. There are many times when he wants to live only in the present, away from the obsessive past. He tries to recall conversations he has had with his friend, F. Yet he hates being "lashed to the past by the words of a dead man . . . I want to talk to men in taverns and buses and remember nothing" (p. 42). In addition to wanting to forget everything, he also wants to have no control over his life or responsibility for his actions. He wants to be a natural man. He says, "I'm tired of facts, I'm tired of speculations, I want to be consumed by unreason. I want to be swept along" (p. 58). It seems that the narrator doesn't want to be an individual and have an identity; he wants rather to be subsumed into something else--to lose himself, so to speak. This desired state can be achieved through religious mysticism, through sex, through mass politics--in a word, through Magic, which in Beautiful Losers is the antithesis of rationality and systems and sometimes seems to be connected to nostalgia for a past environment.

His primary form of escape from the present is his obsession with Catherine Tekakwitha, the Iroquois virgin saint who died in 1680 at age twenty-four, and indulgence in the primitive is part of the obsession. He wants a savage, primitive lover to take him out of himself; he addresses Catherine:

> I hope you are very dark. I want to detect a little whiff of raw meat and white blood on your thick black hair. I hope there is a little grease left in your thick black hair. Or is it all buried in the Vatican, vaults of hidden combs? (p. 17)

The narrator fell in love with Catherine when he saw a religious picture of her standing among birch trees, river behind her, two birds in the foreground. She and her natural setting seem to symbolize everything that is lacking in his life, and yet there is a common bond that links this man and woman: obsession. Leaving out of account that Catherine has been dead for nearly three hundred years, the narrator is obsessed with "coming down on a saint"; and she, during her short life, was equally obsessed with remaining a virgin. Early in the novel the narrator speculates that it was the squalid life in an Iroquois longhouse that made Catherine reject the world and become a Christian martyr: "Confronted with this assault of human machinery, she must have developed elaborate and bright notions of heaven--and a hatred for finite shit" (p. 55). The "must," however, probably tells us more about the narrator's reaction to "finite shit," the garbage of life, than about the life of the Iroquois.

If Beautiful Losers is seen as a romantic pastoral, it is important that Catherine is an Indian. As in The Wabeno Feast, the Indians are associated with Magic, the non-rational or true spirituality, and the white people with technology, destruction, and death. The relationship between technology and religion is made evident by the narrator:

> French Canadian schoolbooks do not encourage respect for the Indians. Some part of the Canadian Catholic mind is not certain of the Church's victory over the Medicine Man. No wonder the forests of Quebec are mutilated and sold to America. Magic trees sawed with a crucifix. Murder the saplings. (p. 73)

Indians are thought to live with nature not in opposition to it. The Indian religions are religions of Magic, but the Catholic religion is on the side of Western technology and is against Magic. According to the narrator there is nothing spiritual in such a religion; the spiritual and the magical are associated with trees, with nature, with the old environment. The trees are as much victims of Western civilization as Edith was of the white men who "raped" her "in a stone quarry or an abandoned mine, someplace very mineral and hard, owned indirectly by U. S. interests" or as Catherine was of the white man's religion which spiritually molested her (p. 75).

What the Indians value is being taken away, and what they are given instead is destructive to their way of life. After Father Lamberville's visit to Catherine, her uncle says, "There will be no harvest, my daughter. Our heaven is dying. From every hill, a spirit cries out in pain, for it is being forgotten" (p. 113). Catherine, however, is eager to hasten the demise of the Indian spirits; she has accepted the power of Western religious techniques and, probably without knowing it, the technology that accompanies it.[10] By implication, a past environment is turned into an art form by new technology; the environment of the North American Indian is turned into pastoral by Western technology which includes the white man's religion.

It is also important within the framework of Beautiful Losers seen as romantic pastoral that the narrator is obsessed with having a sexual relationship with Catherine. In romantic pastorals sexual freedom is often the metaphor for all freedom and sexual fulfillment stands for all fulfillment. For the narrator, sex is a primary way of being "swept along," of "moving out" of the self. One of the high points, if not the highest, of the narrator's life occurred when he kissed Edith's thigh before they made love for the first time. He recalls that "it was just a shape of Edith: then it was just a humanoid shape: then it was just a shape--and for a blessed second truly I was not alone, I was part of a family" (p. 122). This sounds like a depersonalized mystical experience, but it does seem to depend on cancelling out his own individuality and certainly on blotting out Edith as a person; she is just a shape, and even worse, parts of her body are just detachable shapes--material, so to speak, to feed his momentary need for community. Perhaps Edith can be seen here as a surrogate for Catherine. Edith is also an Indian, and she, too, wants to lose herself and yet become part of a community; she wants to

> be freed from the unbearable coils of secular pleasure, and soar into that blind realm, so like sleep, so like death, that journey of pleasure beyond pleasure, where each man travels as an orphan toward an atomic ancestry, more anonymous, more nourishing than the arms of blood or foster family. (pp. 218-19)

With F. as her mentor, this orphan tries to be "swept away" by sex.

Thus, it can be seen that there are several features of romantic pastoralism in Beautiful Losers. The emphasis on sex, especially on a sexual encounter with an Indian woman (whether dead or alive), is part of the pastoral pattern at its most primitive. The idealization of the Indian religion and way of life over Western civilization is part of this same pattern as is the dichotomy between Magic (nature) and System (technology) with Magic celebrated as the positive force.

6.3 The motion picture is now our most prevalent art form. It is a magical yet technological way of transcending oneself; yet, the escape or transformation of the old man at the end of the novel is full of ironies. If Cohen is saying that art is the achievement of "balance in the chaos of existence," and his novel is one attempt at such balance, then Beautiful Losers becomes more like classical pastoral than romantic pastoral.

However, if one focuses on the role of art and of the artist as presented by Cohen in his novel, Beautiful Losers comes closer to being a classical pastoral than a romantic pastoral. The classical pastoral emphasizes balance, reconciliation, or a middle ground between the natural and the artificial, between the instinctual and the rational, or between the formless and the patterned. The process of creating art can be seen as just such a balancing act. The scene in Book III where the old man turns into a movie of Ray Charles and the narrator's definition of a saint in Book I demonstrate--the first ironically and the second obliquely --the importance of art and the artist in society.

The motion picture is now our most prevalent art form.[11] It is technological and yet magical; it is part of System and yet an escape from System. Movies are as important to the narrator as they are to Breavman in The Favourite Game. When he injures his hand and burns his hair with the legacy of fireworks that F. has left him, the narrator wants to go to a movie to get away from pain and frustration, to get away from his messy life:

> isn't there somewhere fresh where I can tuck my eyes in a clean bed and dream new bodies, oh I've got to get to a movie and take my eyes out for a pee, a movie will put me back in my skin because I've leaked all over the kitchen from all my holes, movie will stuff pores with white splinters and stop my invasion of the world, missed movies will kill me tonight. (p. 81)

F. refuses to describe Catherine's penitence in detail to the narrator; he says, "You know what pain looks like, that kind of pain, you've been inside newsreel Belsen" (p. 246). He seems to be suggesting that seeing movies expands experience and heightens sensitivity. However, the opposite could also be the truth, and knowledge gained from newsreels is not the same as that gained from first-hand experience. Maybe that is why F. leaves a legacy of fireworks to his friend; then he can experience pain first-hand and not rely solely on movies, which provide only vicarious experience.

The relationship between art and life is presented in terms of feature film and newsreel. F. recalls an outing to the System Theatre with Edith and the narrator:

> the frames streamed at the screen . . . it was more like a ghostly white snake sealed in an immense telescope. It was a serpent swimming home, lazily occupying the entire sewer which irrigated the auditorium. It was the first snake in the shadows of the original garden, the albino orchard snake offering our female memory the taste of--everything? . . . I studied the snake and he made me greedy for everything. (pp. 281-82)

Because of movies one can have everything. At this time F. thinks of the question that will torment him most: "What will happen when the newsreel escapes into the Feature?" (p. 282). If the Feature is art and the street is life, the newsreel lies in between them and is a combination of both. Letting the newsreel escape into the Feature makes a powerful new hybrid reality: "It took courage! I let the newsreel escape, I invited it to walk right into the plot, and they merged in awful originality, just as trees and plastic synthesize new powerful landscapes" (p. 282). The implication is that reality becomes real only when it becomes part of a movie; for instance, if Sophia Loren strips for a flood victim, the flood will be real at last (p. 283). Art--the motion picture as art--becomes the measure of the reality of an event, a person, or an emotion.

After giving the Magic message F. writes: "I believed that I had conceived the vastest dream of my generation: I wanted to be a magician. That was my idea of glory. Here is a plea based on my whole experience: do not be a magician, be magic" (p. 207). F. is advising his friend to reach further than he did--don't be a mere creator, F. says; be the content. That is how the narrator ends. In the third part of the novel, he is an old man who goes into the System Theatre to see a movie. Although everyone else can see the movie, he cannot:

> he saw row after row of silent raised eyes, and the occasional mouth chewing mechanically, and the eyes

> shifted continuously, as if they were watching a small pingpong game. (p. 297).
>
> The movie was invisible to him. His eyes were blinking at the same rate as the shutter in the projector, times per second, and therefore the screen was merely black. It was automatic. . . . For the first time in his life the old man relaxed totally. (p. 298).

Not only is he relaxed, he is invisible too. The theatre attendant's flashlight beam shines through him. It seems that he and the movie have become one for the moment. When he leaves the theatre, his presence causes a riot; but everyone is happy because the action is now in the streets and not only in movies. Everyone who wants a "second chance" comes out; it is the first night of spring, of hope, of revolution:

> The old man had commenced his remarkable performance (which I do not intend to describe). Suffice it to say that he disintegrated slowly . . . he dissolved from the inside out. His presence had not completely disappeared when he began to reassemble himself. . . . he allowed the spectators a vision of All Chances At Once! . . . he greedily reassembled himself into--into a movie of Ray Charles. Then he enlarged the screen, degree by degree, like a documentary on the Industry. The moon occupied one lens of his sunglasses, and he laid out his piano keys across a shelf of the sky, and he leaned over him [them] as though they were truly the row of giant fishes to feed a hungry multitude. A fleet of jet planes dragged his voice over us who were holding hands. (pp. 204-5)

The author (or a new narrator) seems to suggest that he is one of the watching and hungry multitude waiting to be fed. The image of the blind black pianist seems to have universal and positive significance; he seems Christ-like in the sense that he will feed the hungry people although with sounds from his piano rather than with fishes as Jesus did. Ray Charles, it seems, provides food for the spirit rather than for the body.

However, the vision or epiphany of art that the old man turns into can be seen as ironic even though it does seem to be so strongly positive.[12] For instance, Ray Charles seems to be a bad choice (as Bob Dylan and any other American entertainer would be); an image of a Canadian Indian, an A_____ perhaps, would be more appropriate in the context of the novel's remarks against American imperialism. Ray Charles is definitely a part of a system, part of the American entertainment business. And the fact that it is an image of an entertainer, even though he is blind and black, undercuts any serious meaning this "transformation" might have for the audience. The response of the people is "Just sit back and enjoy it, I guess" and "Thank God it's only a movie" (p. 305, p. 306). Neither seems adequate as response to a modern miracle; the merging of art and technology (in a way that is not evident in a stage play, novel, or painting, for example) that occurs in the motion picture is a kind of miracle. However, perhaps modern miracles shouldn't look like movies if people are to accept them as miracles; technological marvels abound everywhere, are taken for granted, and people would now expect something more "miraculous" of their miracles. And yet maybe to become the content of a movie is the modern apotheosis. The narrator has "moved out of himself," has transcended the body and the mind by being transformed into a feature film (or at least a newsreel) and becoming art. Now he can become a part of that community he previously thought closed to him, although not in the way he expected. As the content of a movie, others can live vicariously through him: "--Hey! cried a New Jew, laboring on the lever of the broken Strength Test. Hey. Somebody's making it!" (p. 306). At the same time that the New Jew is indulging in futile effort himself, he can admire or envy someone who is "making it."

The miracle of the narrator's becoming a movie is credited to St. Catherine. He has "made it" just as Catherine Tekakwitha "made it" many years before, and his "making it" is an ironic comment on her "transformation." The author would have the Jesuits "*submit this document* [the novel], *whatever its intentions, as the first item in a revived testimonial to the Indian girl*" (p. 306). This statement, surely, is made tongue-in-cheek. Cohen's intentions are those of the ironist, not of the psalmist, and the Jesuits would never consider *Beautiful Losers* as a testimonial to a Roman Catholic virgin saint. In addition, there is the irony of having the author (or call him the "new narrator") assume the pose of a smoking, radio-listening Christ interceding on our behalf from his perch on the neon cross on Mount Royal or from the gun-turret of a plane. Presumably, if Cohen is the modern Christ, *Beautiful Losers* becomes the Bible for our time.

Considering the author as intermediary at the end is not a surprise if one recalls the definition of "saint" provided by the narrator of the first part of the novel. The definition seems to suggest that sainthood is the achievement of balance; but as far as the reader is concerned, a saint is an obsessive creature of extremes, and the novel does nothing to destroy this preconceived notion. The definition makes much more sense if "artist" is substituted for "saint" as follows:

> A saint [artist] is someone who has achieved a remote human possibility. It is impossible to say what that possibility is. I think it has something to do with the energy of love. Contact with this energy results in the exercise of a kind of balance in the chaos of existence. A saint [artist] does not dissolve the chaos; if he did the world would have changed long ago. I do not think that a saint [artist] dissolves the chaos even for himself, for there is something arrogant and warlike in the notion of a man setting the universe in order. (p. 121)

It is the artist, rather than the saint, who is a "balancing monster of love" and the creation of a work of art is a "balancing" act. A work of art is the achievement of "balance in the chaos of existence"; it does not create perfect order out of chaos but rather contains the chaos within itself (as Beautiful Losers itself does). Although the artist is not able to make order out of chaos (and perhaps does not even want to), he is nevertheless a special person. As the images suggest, he uses his technique to capture the particularity of nature, not to change or destroy it.

In The Favourite Game Breavman used the snow as his canvas to make beautiful body imprints (nature serving as raw material for art); here the artist's imprint on nature is no more than that of a ski gliding down a hill, an enhancement of natural contours. This, rather than the vision of Ray Charles, might be the epiphany of the artistic process that corresponds to the one in Cohen's first novel:

> It is a kind of balance that is his glory. He rides the drifts like an escaped ski. His course is a caress of the hill. His track is a drawing of the snow in a moment of its particular arrangement with wind and rock. Something in him so loves the world that he gives himself to the laws of gravity and chance. Far from flying with the angels, he traces with the fidelity of a seismograph needle the state of the solid bloody landscape. His house is dangerous and finite, but he is at home in the world. He can love the shapes of human beings, the fine and twisted shapes of the heart. (pp. 121-22)

There is something godlike in the artist's love for the world and his involvement in it; rather than denying or escaping from the "solid bloody landscape," he experiences it so that he can use it in his art of which we partake.[13] Such intermediaries between us and the landscape, whether physical or psychologial, are necessary:

> It is good to have among us such men, such balancing monsters of love. It makes me think that the numbers in the bag actually correspond to the numbers on the raffles we have bought so dearly, and so the prize is not an illusion. (p. 122)

As long as such people exist, our lives as New Jews "laboring on the lever of the broken Strength Test" are not lived in vain, are not a cheat.

Therefore, it can be said about Beautiful Losers, as it was about The Favourite Game, that art is the ultimate good that Cohen recognizes. Through artistic creation (rather than sainthood) a balance can be struck between reason and nonreason, between System and Magic. In such creation passion and imagination are essential, and yet design and thoughtful selection are equally necessary. Such an insistence on balance fits better into the classical rather than the romantic pastoral pattern.

6.4 Even though Beautiful Losers has features of romantic and classical pastoralism, because it is a work of irony rather than a psalm, an attack against System is not automatically a celebration of Magic. F.'s words in praise of Magic are suspect for several reasons, and sex is treated humourously and ironically. Catherine and her "sainthood" are also viewed with irony--she, in spite of being an Indian and a "saint," did not get rid of System; she simply exchanged one system for another. The words Telephone Dance suggest that nature, technology, and art are all the same thing. And because there is no hierarchy of preferred activities in Cohen's "vision of All Chances At Once," the novel is essentially non-pastoral.

But even though his work has features of both types of pastoral--romantic and classical--perhaps it is not accurate to place Cohen's fiction in either category since his vision of life as a whole seems not to fit the constraints that such a pattern imposes. His vision lacks the hierarchy of values that is at the heart of pastoralism. Also, Cohen is essentially an ironist, not a psalmist, and Beautiful Losers is a work of irony. For instance, after writing his long piece in praise of Magic, F. seems to deny it: "I do not understand the mystery, after all" and "I'm picking lies out of the air" (p. 199). With this denial, then, what are we to make of the Magic message? And, taken in context, maybe "the magic" is simply his masturbating of the nurse, Mary Voolnd (p. 200). If F. is indeed in the hospital with a terminal case of V.D., that is almost the only kind of sex he is capable of. Also, the disease may have affected his mind; not being capable of rational thought anymore, he might be dismissing it as unimportant or even as undesirable. Exactly what F. means by Magic is not always clear. It signifies the non-rational aspects of man's nature and life, but when taken in more specific contexts, the word becomes disturbing. For instance, F. has a confession to make: "Now my fat confession. I loved the magic of guns. . . . Guns suck magic. . . . The guns are green. The flowers poke" (p. 206). Guns certainly sound positive here--like growing things. He probably means that guns are necessary for revolution and their use marks a new beginning in Quebec politics, a beginning comparable to the sprouting of healthy, vital new shoots. However, it is obvious that guns are seeds whose harvest is death. Perhaps, just as buying soap made from human fat is one way, providing guns for the revolution is another way F. has to satisfy his "lust for secular gray magic" (p. 207). He would prefer black or white magic, perhaps, but he has to settle for what he can get.

These examples, however, should make the reader hesitate to conclude that Magic in itself is necessarily a postive thing. Furthermore, Magic and System may, in fact, be one thing. In an interview with Michael Harris, Cohen said that he sees religion as "a technique for strength and for making the universe hospitable."[14] If one can assume that he is equating religion with Magic, there ceases to be an either/or dichotomy between System and Magic because the two are the same thing. If religion or Magic is a technique that enables us weak human beings to live more comfortably in a hostile universe (the aim of science and technology), it coalesces with System.

Cohen is ironic at the expense of sex, too. The 1964 political demonstration is like a mass orgy. With echoes of Frankenstein, the crowd swallows F.: "F. pressed deeper into the mass of bodies. They received us automatically like quicksand swallowing up the laboratory monster" (p. 150). The narrator loses himself in the crowd "of which I was now a joyful particle, pressed even closer about the monument, as if we were a nut on a screw to which the whole city we longed to possess wound us tighter and tighter like a wrench" (p. 151). Like Plastic Man and Plastic Woman, the narrator and a woman who is standing behind him at the rally give and get anonymous sexual stimulation; the woman's fingernails are "smooth and tapered as a fuselage" (p. 151). The social context of the scene and the negative technological images put the sexual act into ironic perspective.

This scene is matched by the even more absurd one that contains F., Edith, and the Danish Vibrator. F.'s goal seems to be "to perfect the pan-orgasmic body, extend the erogenous zone over the whole fleshly envelope, popularize the Telephone Dance" (p. 211). "Fleshly envelope" suggests that there is a soul or spirit inside; F., however, is not interested in that. He is a kind of Pygmalion or Dr. Frankenstein, an artist (or mad scientist) who works with living bodies rather than painting on canvas or chipping a form out of marble (p. 221). He thinks Edith's body is his perfect creation, a machine that now needs only occasional adjustment. F. has "created" or perfected Edith's body, but ironically all she wants to do is "move out" of it. Edith wants to lose herself, and the advice F. gives her on how to come to orgasm seems to suggest that it is all a matter of right technique used on a fleshly machine. As he reads out of sex manuals and recounts the torture of Brébeuf and Lalement by the Iroquois in order to stimulate Edith, it is possible to conclude that he regards the mind as the most erogenous zone of all. F.'s words are not sufficient, however, and Edith turns to a machine for help.

> Bearlike . . . she swung at me. . . . Thus the bear, with a swipe of his clawed paw, scoops the fish from the bosom of the stream. Crablike, the D.V. scuttled across the polished floor, humming like an overturned locomotive. (p. 219)

Ironically Cohen uses comparisons from nature to describe both Edith grabbing the Danish Vibrator away from F. and the movements of the machine itself. F. is there, of course, but paradoxically Edith wants sexual satisfaction with no human contact. The machine, however, seems to have become as human as the human beings have become machine-like. The Danish Vibrator seems "to have a life of its own" (p. 224). Pulling the plug doesn't matter since it has "learned to feed itself" (p. 225). In a rather absurd, anti-erotic scene the machine attacks F. and Edith. F. says, "I knew it would be insatiable but I was ready to submit. . . . It hummed in my ears like alabaster lips" (p. 224). Obviously, human lips would not be half as satisfying to him. "Edith, quite happily, became nothing but a buffet of juice, flesh, excrement, muscle to serve its appetite" (p. 226). She begs it to stay, but it "climbed onto the window sill, purring deeply, revved up to a sharp moan, and launched itself through the glass" of the window (p. 227). Edith and F. watch "the descent of the apparatus into the huge rolling sea, which closed over its luminous cups like the end of a civilization" (pp. 227-28). Perhaps the author is suggesting that if anyone enjoys the kind of experience Edith and F. have had, or considers reading about it erotic or positive in any way, civilization may indeed soon be at an end. It is clear that sex with the Danish Vibrator was the greatest sexual experience for both F. and Edith; sex with mere human beings is now bound to be disappointing, and their alienation from the narrator begins here. If these two "sex scenes" are the reason why people buy Beautiful Losers, Cohen has certainly perpetrated a hoax on his readers; and those who see this novel as a celebration of sex probably ignore the humour and irony with which the author deals with this subject.[15]

Cohen seems to see that technology modifies sexuality. One could say that new technology, new electronic devices such as the Danish Vibrator, convert sex into an art form; that is, "natural" sex is turned into pastoral by "electronic" sex. The new technology creates a present environment that is judged to be corrupt and degrading--judged, that is, by the reader who may find himself or herself nostalgic for a past sexual environment. The reader may very well regard the past, whatever it was like, as much less corrupt and degrading and hence definitely preferable to the new sexual environment; but Cohen, of course, because he is using the ironic mode, cannot be credited or blamed for making such a judgement himself.

Another example of irony that undermines Beautiful Losers as a romantic pastoral is the role of Catherine. It is tempting to see her as a convert to a mystical religion, and part of Magic, but according to the narrator, she turned away from human systems, which were brutal and repulsive, to a religious system. If Tekakwitha means "she who puts things in order," Catherine is no more without a system than the other characters (p. 55). Nevertheless, to deny her part in all earthly systems, she refuses to marry. She chooses a different way to put things in order. Not able to accept the ordinary pain and joy of living as an ordinary human being on earth, Catherine adopts the "new" Roman Catholic system of denial and martyrdom, and she is "Mangled Every Hour in Mysterious

Machinery" (p. 69). In spite of being an Indian and a saint--two types of people whom we assume, within the expectations set up by romantic pastoralism, to be free from System--Catherine is definitely part of a system.

The narrator comments that "new systems are forced on the world by men who simply cannot bear the pain of living with what is" (p. 69). Perhaps those who accept the new systems are equally unable to face life as it is. Catherine leaves her uncle's village, steals off to Sault Saint-Louis, and becomes part of a new religious system. As she prays by the St. Lawrence River, "behind her was the tranquil Christian village, and all the meaningful tortures" (p. 242). These tortures are only meaningful if they are part of a system of meaning. Catherine's part in the system is to be a martyr. She is determined to keep her body virgin, but paradoxically she does not care what happens to her body (p. 243). In penitence she wants to do "the most horrible painful thing," and on one occasion she spends "several slow hours caressing her pathetic legs with hot coals" (p. 245). She wants to mortify the body, and she and a friend whip each other with birch switches until the blood runs. This obsession with torture here can paradoxically be compared to the obsession with mechanical super-stimulation in the Danish Vibrator scene that might impress one as torture if it weren't funny. F. comments on Catherine's tortures: "She did not know why she prayed and fasted. These mortifications she performed in a poverty of spirit" (p. 246). F. might not be correct; but if he is, the implication is that for all the true spirituality involved in her actions, Catherine might as well have indulged in an orgy with a Danish Vibrator! And, as another paradox, Edith, who can be seen as a twentieth-century reincarnation of Catherine, then becomes as much a saint as

Catherine; there is no real difference between them.

Catherine's excessive penitence is like slow suicide. By sewing thorns into her sleeping blanket, she literally tears her skin off in shreds. Through torture she is trying to "move out" of herself. Even when she is still alive, "her body seems so far away" (p. 267). The priests ask her, "What do we sound like?" and she replies, "You sound like machinery." "What kind of machinery?" they ask, and she answers, using a phrase that paradoxically combines time and timelessness, the spiritual and the mechanical: "Ordinary eternal machinery" (p. 258). Catherine is killed by the machinery of the Roman Catholic religion, and after the first miracle (in denial of her Indian heritage her face turns beautiful and white)[16] she becomes a part of the machinery of sainthood: "At that precise moment the girl entered the eternal machinery of the sky" (p. 266). As Catherine Tekakwitha she refused to be possessed by anyone; as St. Catherine, the seventeenth-century Indian girl ironically becomes the possession of everyone, and her martyrdom is recognized by having "a plastic reproduction of [her] little body on the dashboard of every Montréal taxi" (p. 6).[17]

The paradoxical words "ordinary eternal machinery" remind the reader of the constant mention of the Telephone Dance. Before the European missionaries came to convert them to a religion that is part of System, the Indians participated in the Telephone Dance. When the French made war on the Indians, "people who preferred the intrusion of foreign magic to the wrath of the Carignan" welcomed the priests (p. 101). The missionary in Catherine's village insisted that the old people take their fingers out of their ears so they could hear his words; he said, "Old as you are, you must forget forever the Telephone Dance" (p. 104). On becoming Christians the Indians lose something very important--the ability to tune in to themselves and to connect themselves with nature:

> As those waxy digits were withdrawn a wall of silence was thrown up between the forest and the hearth, and the old people gathered at the priest's hem shivered with a new kind of loneliness. They could not hear the raspberries breaking into domes, they could not smell the numberless pine needles combing out the wind, they could not remember the last moment of a trout as it lived between a flat white pebble on the streaked bed of a stream and the fast shadow of a bear claw. Like children who listen in vain to the sea in plastic sea shells they sat bewildered. Like children at the end of a long bedtime story they were suddenly thirsty. (pp. 104-5)

They lose their ability to take part in the Telephone Dance. Paradoxically, Cohen labels this natural ability that the Indians have with a technological term, thus suggesting that the natural and the technological are interconnected--or are the same thing. Also, calling the activity a dance identifies it as a form of art. Hence, nature, technology, and art are all the same thing.

The image of the Telephone Dance is used again in a different context. The body is like a closed electrical circuit, and by sticking their fingers in each other's ears and kissing, F. claims that he can listen to Edith's body, that he "heard the inside of Edith" (p. 158). He calls this the Telephone Dance because it took place in a telephone booth in the System Theatre and because its connections resemble that of the telephone. He explains to the narrator how it originated:

> Maybe we were under the influence of the telephones. . . . one of the fluorescent lights was flickering . . . The telephones kept their steady black, the only stable shape in the shifting gloom. They hung there like carved masks, black, gleaming, smooth as the toes of kissed stone R. C. saints. (p. 37)

When the pay phone rang once, F. and Edith were frightened:

> there was someone watching us, not that we cared. He was watching us in the mirror of the fortune-telling scale.
>
> . . . .
>
> his whole weary life among the water pipes and urinals seemed to hang on this telephone message--
>
> . . . .
>
> He stopped, waiting, I suppose, for the second ring, which never came. He snapped his fingers, turned, climbed back on the scale. (pp. 38-39)
>
> We felt delivered, Edith and I! The telephone, hitherto so foreboding and powerful, was our friend! It was the agent of some benign electronic deity, and we wanted to praise it. I suppose that certain primitive bird and snake dances began the same way, a need to imitate the fearful and the beautiful, yes, an imitative procedure to acquire some of the qualities of the adored awesome beast. (p. 39)

So, "to imitate the fearful and the beautiful" and "to acquire some of the qualities" of the telephone, they invented the Telephone Dance. "I _became_ a telephone" F. claims, and "Edith was the electrical conversation that went through me" (p. 41). What was it, the narrator asks, "Ordinary eternal machinery" F. answers. This paradoxically, is the same answer that Catherine gave when, through death after self-torture, she "moved out of herself." Presumably, then, to hear "ordinary eternal machinery" one has to get outside oneself, but the way this happens is not important; listening to the sound of nature as the Indians do, using a Danish Vibrator for sexual stimulation as F. and Edith do, or dying a saint's death as Catherine does, it's all the same. Perhaps the main irony of _Beautiful Losers_ is that there is no hierarchy of preferred activities since they all amount to the same thing. The reader may be surprised and shocked at such a conclusion since we are, generally speaking, used to dichotomy rather than to unity--especially between the realms of the physical and the spiritual.[18]

Thus, in spite of what the characters in his novels say against reason and technology, Cohen himself puts them to good use (especially as ironic images) serving his art. There are parts of both novels that tempt the reader to categorize each novel as a whole as either romantic or classical pastoral. For The Favourite Game such an interpretation is not amiss; but if Cohen is persuading us to take any position at all in regard to pastoralism and technology or to Magic and System, it probably is that we refrain from creating dualities and instead open ourselves to "a vision of All Chances At Once" for which he as artist serves as guide. If this is his position, then, although in isolated situations a technological horizon separating new and old environments can be recognized and some characters do express nostalgia for outmoded technology, Cohen's novels as a whole are not pastoral literature.

CHAPTER VII

ALICE MUNRO

Alice Munro seems to have almost no sense of new technology or of the line that separates a past environment and new technology; and in this way her stories resemble conventional pastoral which has no technological horizon. Although she writes about pastoralism and uses characters who would fit into a pastoral, her novel and stories are not pastoral. Very seldom does she deal with older environments that have been turned into an art form by new technology unless, of course, one takes her whole milieu, mainly a small town in western Ontario, as being an environment that no longer exists except in art. There is no feeling, however, of nostalgia for the past or for superseded technology, no yearning to relive "the good old days." Munro's narrators are not shepherds who mourn the passing of a better and simpler way of life; they usually are women who are glad to have finished with the past.

7.1 Alice Munro's work may seem to provide examples of pastoral of the conventional type. However, although she deals with characters and situations that could fit into a pastoral framework, her fiction is not pastoral. For instance, Munro recognizes that there is a strong temptation for people (both writers and others) to romanticize their childhoods and to indulge in a subjective perception of nature. In addition, the narrator of *Lives of Girls and Women* *does not choose between living in the country or small town and in the city; she sees good in all these.*

Although in the work of Alice Munro there is a recognition of the contrast between nature and technology and a choice or a reconciliation between them that some characters make, such a choice or reconciliation is not pressed upon the reader by the author. In her novel and stories neither nature nor technology is seen as completely good or bad, and neither is the old necessarily superior to the new, nor vice versa. She does not take sides in the way that Drew and Kroetsch do. Also, in contrast to these two writers, Munro's women are more often seen as the "civilizing" force and the men as creatures of the "wilderness," and the men who are not seem to be "freaky" or insufficient as men. In having no ironic or satiric vision of the conflict between nature and technology, Munro differs from Atwood, Simpson,and Richler. In two important ways her work resembles Cohen's: neither takes sides in the conflict and both willingly take whatever is at hand to create their art.

However, while Cohen seems to recognize the existence of a technological horizon and deals with it ironically, Munro has almost no sense of the dividing point between an older environment and the new technology that has turned "its predecessor into an art form." Her work is full of trucks and cars and radio operators, but such references to technology are used mainly to place a character in a social context. Conventional pastoral has no technological horizon while in modern pastoral it is vivid and important, and since it has no technological horizon, Munro's small town scene resembles conventional pastoral. Her fiction seems rather old-fashioned and has an isolated, detached effect, not unlike that of classical pastoral, because she observes the life of her characters as somewhat removed from the world of contemporary technology in which she and her reader exist.

Most of her work centres upon memories of small town life, of childhood in an older environment; and even though the memories are often unpleasant ones, such reliance on memories of the past could be seen as nostalgia, which is a common element in pastoralism. However, in the hands of Alice Munro memories of the past are not used in the expected way. Generally she subtly condemns the pastoral ideology as a kind of "mental cellophane," and yet she sympathetically explains its universal and everlasting appeal. Also, she is aware that storytelling (and other art forms) by its very nature can serve as a powerful tool to aid the pastoral impulse. One of the chief occupations of the shepherd in classical pastoral was telling stories. Munro's stories are "told" in confidence to us by a narrator, usually a woman who has lived through a traumatic or moving experience. These narrators, however, show little nostalgia for the past or for outmoded technology, and they seem to be relieved that the past is finished and done with. Hence, Munro's work, even when it uses some feature common to pastoral literature or is about pastoralism, is not really pastoral.

Del Jordan's account of her own childhood in Lives of Girls and Women does not have the kind of nostalgia that is usual in a pastoral, but when she was younger she did tend to mythologize her mother's childhood. In the Flats Road house there is a picture Ada had painted

> in the far-off early days--the possibly leisured, sunny, loving days--of her marriage. It showed a stony road and a river between mountains, and sheep driven along the road by a little girl in a red shawl. The mountains and the sheep looked alike, lumpy, woolly, purplish-gray. Long ago I had believed that the little girl was really my mother and that this was the desolate country of her early life.[1]

Del wanted to think that the picture showed Ada's nostalgia for her childhood but then "learned that she had copied the scene from the National Geographic" and not from nature (p. 70). Del doesn't give up so easily, however. From her mother she has discovered that Ada spent her childhood in the backwoods, in a part of Ontario even further from large urban centres than Jubilee is. Ada lived in an old frame house

> in the middle of fields where the rocks--part of the pre-Cambrian Shield--were poking through the soil like bones through flesh. The house which I had never seen in a photograph--perhaps none had ever been taken . . . appeared in my mind as plainly as if I had seen it in a newspaper--the barest, darkest, tallest of all old frame houses, simple and familiar yet with something terrible about it, enclosing evil, like a house where a murder has been committed. (p. 73)

A place that Ada is impatient and matter-of-fact about, Del romanticizes. Probably because she is a child who reads a lot, Del makes Ada's childhood home into a Gothic setting to match her "gothic" childhood:

> Wasn't it always November, the ground hard, ice splintered on the puddles, dead grass floating from the wires? Yes, and the bush near and spooky, with the curious unconnected winds that lift the branches one by one. (p. 74)

However, when Ada writes for the city paper, her articles are "full of long decorative descriptions of the countryside from which she had fled," and these descriptions don't seem to match the memories she recounts to her daughter (p. 80). Ada seems to be of two minds about the environment she has left behind. Del herself is more careful to be faithful to the facts of her childhood; she survives the temptations to romanticize

Jubilee and its citizens.

What the facts of childhood actually are, however, is one of the problems facing an author who chooses to write about her own past. Ada's memories of her religious fanatic mother, of wounding poverty and childhood deprivation, are different from her brother Bill's memories. Perhaps the facts were not the same for brother and sister or else one or both have unconsciously distorted the facts in creating their memories. Bill lives in Cleveland far away from nature, which he now seems to romanticize: "The financial aspect isn't always the only thing," he tells Ada. "There's the being closer to Nature. Without all this--you know, running around, doing what isn't good for you, living high " (p. 86). Her reply is:

> What is so good about Nature? Nature is just one thing preying on another all the way down the line. Nature is just a lot of waste and cruelty, maybe not from Nature's point of view but from a human point of view. Cruelty is the law of Nature. (p. 86)

For Bill the country is a place of simplicity and good health. He remembers his childhood differently from the way Ada remembers hers:

> Well I don't mean like that, Addie. I don't mean wild animals and all like that. I mean like our life we had at home, where we didn't have too many of the comforts . . . but we had a simple life and hard work and fresh air and a good spiritual example in our momma. (p. 86)

In the statements of these two people are the two extremes of opinion about nature--the sentimental and the Darwinian, one could label them. It seems from these statements that the truth about memories of childhood is a subjective truth. Bill has remembered all his life that their mother brought in a cocoon on a milkweed stem in the fall and that it hatched on Easter Sunday with a blizzard raging outside. This is not the kind of thing Ada remembers about their mother. There is no evidence that either one of them is consciously distorting the facts; either or both of them could be telling the truth about childhood.

Perception of nature, too, is often subjective. What Del sees in nature seems to be a projection of her own mood. At one time she had a Wordsworthian response to nature that she couldn't share with anyone:

> For a year or two I had been looking at trees, fields, landscape with a secret, strong exaltation. In some moods, some days, I could feel for a clump of grass, a rail fence, a stone pile, such pure unbounded emotion as I used to hope for, and have inklings of, in connection with God. (p. 165)

She sees the landscape very differently in the company of Art Chamberlain:

> now with Mr. Chamberlain I saw that the whole of nature became debased, maddeningly erotic. It was just now the richest, greenest time of year; ditches sprouted coarse daisies, toadflax, buttercups, hollows were full of nameless faintly golden bushes and the gleam of high creeks. I saw all this as a vast arrangement of hiding places, ploughed fields beyond rearing up like shameless mattresses. Little paths, opening in the bushes, crushed places in the grass, where no doubt a cow had lain, seemed to me specifically, urgently inviting as certain words or pressures. (p. 165)

After Chamberlain's "performance" the "landscape was postcoital, distant and meaningless," and after her break with Garnet, Del sees that things once again have their "own sober and familiar shapes. Unconnected to the life of love, uncolored by love, the world resumes its own, its natural and callous importance " (p. 167, p. 236). Del should have been prepared for the extreme subjectivity of her perceptions of nature, especially those perceptions influenced by sexual passion. Her reading should have prepared her to see sex in terms of nature and technology and nature and technology in terms of sex:

> One book compared having sexual intercourse to going through a train tunnel (presumably if you were the whole train) and blasting out into a mountain meadow so high, so blest and beautiful, you felt as if you were in the sky. (p. 172)

Her reading of novels, however, did not prepare her for life.

Del seems to be comfortable enough with both nature and technological change. Before she moves into Jubilee with her mother in order to continue her education, she lives at the end of the Flats Road, a half-way place: "The Flats Road was not part of town but it was not part of the country either. . . . There were no real farms " (p. 6). Her father has nine acres and raises silver foxes until he goes broke with them and has to change to chickens. The wilderness is not appealing: "The bush behind it [the farm] was black, hot, thick with thorny bushes, and dense with insects whirling in galaxies " (p. 2). Del doesn't fear it, however. She is comfortable enough catching frogs for Uncle Benny's fish bait, and she takes the pelting of the foxes as an activity necessary for the family's livelihood. The country is changing, though. Even by 1882 when Uncle Craig was born, the log roads had been replaced by gravel. (p. 29) Once Del sees a deer near her Uncle's farm and her Aunt Elspeth comments that "it used to be you'd see them regularly . . . But not now. That's the first I've seen in I don't know how many years " (p. 35). As people move further into the bush and clear it, the deer must retreat.

The house at the end of the Flats Road has electricity but no running water. The Jordans have a car and a telephone, but Ada longs for town-life which she thinks is more civilized. In many ways Ada fits easily into town-life. No one in town goes walking in the park:

> Why should anybody in Jubilee walk to see more grass and dirt and trees, the same thing that pushed in on the town from every side? They would walk downtown, to look at stores, meet on the double sidewalks, feel the hope of activity. (p. 155)

Ada is glad to leave the chaos of the country for the more orderly life of town. Del herself is of two minds; she misses the country but loves town life. She misses

> the nearness of the river and the swamp, also the real anarchy of winter, blizzards that shut us up tight in our house as if it were the Ark. But I loved the order, the wholeness, the intricate arrangement of town life, that only an outsider could see. (p. 69)

At the end of her story, Del plans to leave Jubilee for a larger city (London, Ontario or Toronto probably) where she will have opportunities for a life different from what she had in the country and small town.

Balanced against this idea of the opportunities of city life are the unpleasant aspects of it. When Uncle Benny goes to Toronto to find Madeleine and Diane, the traffic and traffic lights make it impossible for him to reach the street he wants. On his return he gives a description of his experience:

> as he talked a different landscape--cars, billboards, industrial buildings, roads and locked gates and high wire fences, railway tracks, steep cindery embankments, tin sheds, ditches with a little brown water in them, also tin cans, mashed cardboard cartons, all kinds of clogged or barely floating waste--all this seemed to grow up around us . . . we could see how it was to be lost there. (p. 25)

Except in this case of Benny's trip to Toronto none of the horrors of city life are mentioned and the nostalgia for country and small town life is largely missing, and it seems that such a contrast between country and city is expected in the pastoral. A contrast, too, between past and present is expected, but it is a contrast that is only implied here: an urbanized adult recounts in artful form some experiences of childhood perhaps with the aim of imposing some kind of order and wholeness on those experiences.

7.2 In one respect Del is not a typical heroine of pastoral; she believes that knowledge and technology can give protection against accidents of nature (a situation preferable to submitting to such accidents), and at one point she turns to religion, not for some mystical communion with nature, but to provide her with the desired security of knowledge. On the other hand, the men whom Del finds attractive are the ones who are associated with nature, not the ones who are associated with technology.

Del has a longing for order and wholeness. She wants to see a recognizable design or pattern of meaning in life. For instance, Del's father's cousin is not like everyone else because she was deprived of oxygen at birth. Del can't accept the idea of accident in nature: "I shied away from the implication that this was something that could happen to anyone, that I myself might have been blunted, all by lack of some namable, measurable, ordinary thing, like oxygen" (p. 39). To Del knowledge is security. When her father's uncle dies, Del demands all the details from her mother:

> There is no protection, unless it is in knowing. I wanted death pinned down and isolated behind a wall of particular facts and circumstances, not floating around loose, ignored but powerful, waiting to get in anywhere. (p. 46)

Del thinks that knowledge is the only protection against the accidents of nature, that building walls of facts will keep out such accidents. And if Del can be seen as Munro's persona, then another kind of protection is to turn "particular facts and circumstances" into art--into a novel and short stories. Through art one can impose order and wholeness on "the chaos of existence."

Del's mother, Ada, is a believer in knowledge--any kind of knowledge. "Knowledge was not chilly to her, no; it was warm and lovely," and Del shares her appetite for knowledge (p. 64). As a contrast to most women in the other novels discussed, Ada is on the side of technology.[2]

Not for her the role of Earth Mother or advocate of nature. Del's mother is fascinated by the prospect of organ transplants, for instance. It seems sensible to her that if a person dies with perfectly good parts a younger ill person could make use of them through transplants. Transplanting the cornea of eyes is only the beginning, she predicts. She prefers this idea of immortality to the idea of Heaven and Hell:

> all these parts won't die at all, they'll go on living as part of somebody else. . . . We would all be heirs of one another's bodies, we would all be donors too. Death as we know it now would be done away with! (p. 48)

Ada, although excited by the past, is enthusiastic about the future (p. 148). One year the snow is very deep in Jubilee, and she cuts out the picture from the newspaper showing the depth of the snow and saves it for Del's future children:

> "They will never see a thing like that," she said. "By then the snow will all be collected in machines and --dissipated. Or people will be living under transparent domes, with a controlled temperature. There will be no such things as seasons anymore." (p. 140)

She approves of nature being under control. Del wonders:

> How did she collect all her unsettling information about the future? She looked forward to a time when towns like Jubilee would be replaced by domes and mushrooms of concrete, with moving skyways to carry you from one to the other, when the countryside would be bound and tamed forever under broad sweeping ribbons of pavement. Nothing would be the same as we knew it today, no frying pans or bobby pins or printed pages or fountain pens would remain. My mother would not miss a thing. (pp. 140-41)

Ada would not be nostalgic for past technologies; nor would she suffer from future shock. However, she expects that if a change is to come in the lives of girls and women, it must be based on increased self-respect more than on improved birth-control devices, although she does realize how important such technological developments are to the liberation of women (p. 173).

Ada is a rationalist, and religion is something she feels uncomfortable with. She seems readier to believe in burglars than in God. When she does go to the United Church, "she would sit looking all around, cautious but unabashed, like an anthropologist taking note of the behavior of a primitive tribe" (p. 94). Ada is the kind of person who gives the impression that "she was going to pull up shortly and demand that everything make sense," the kind of person who would favour scientific explanations and technological change (p. 95). She is a believer in progress even in the realm of human nature; for instance, she believes that people in general are getting better, that is, less blood-thirsty in their religions (p. 105).

Del's search for God and religion is part of her desire for the security of knowledge. "If God could be discovered, or recalled, everything would be safe," she thinks (p. 99). Using specious logic, Del reasons, "How could people rest, how could they even go on breathing and existing, until they were sure of this? They did go on, so they must be sure" of a God-centred universe (p. 99). The answer, of course, is that people aren't sure and still go on living. Her mother is practical and not really sympathetic to Del's search for religious certainty. It is her view that there must be some design but not one open to human understanding and that people should use their energy to improve life on earth and leave the after-life to the dead. The lack of interest in religion shown by Del's brother frustrates her: "His deep lack of interest, the satisfaction he seemed to take in a world without God were what I really could not bear, and kept hammering at" (p. 104). Del tries to incorporate her belief in God and an orderly universe into her everyday life. She prays to God to have her spared from the humiliation of Household Science, but when she gets what she wanted, she can see that she "had no way of knowing, there was no control for my experiment" (p. 103). When it comes to praying to God, however, to spare the life of Owen's dog (he is to be shot for killing sheep, an activity which has become natural to him), Del realizes that it's no use, that God is not interested, and that Major's death is inevitable:

> Could there be God not contained in the churches' net at all, not made manageable by any spells and crosses, God real, and really in the world, and alien and unacceptable as death? Could there be God amazing, indifferent, beyond faith? (p. 114)

For Del, religion has amounted to no more than a kind of spiritual technology, praying no more than a way to manage God. Here she has to face up to the possibility that religion is as powerless as science to explain or avoid certain things, that God could exist as unmanageable, unpredictable, indifferent to people. Del has to learn that part of growing up is to be able to face life knowing that there is no assurance of divine design and no security inherent in knowledge.

Another kind of knowledge Del later needs to bring her to maturity is a knowledge of men. It seems that the men who make the most positive impact on her life are the ones associated with passion and nature, and those to whom she is least attracted are associated with technology.[3] Although the sexes are reversed, the conventional pastoral pattern generally remains in Lives of Girls and Women.

Jerry Storey is an intelligent boy in Del's grade at school. She likes him as a friend but is never really attracted to him. He is obsessed with technology and describes the tortures and bombings of World War II

> with a controlled excitement, a curious insistent relish. Then he would tell me about the weapons now being developed by the Americans and the Russians; he made their destructive powers seem inevitable, magnificent, useless to combat as the forces of the universe itself. (p. 195)

He describes the development in biological warfare and is cheerful as he "looked ahead to prodigious catastrophe " (p. 195). In addition, he tells Del that

> some day, if the world lasted, newborn babies could be stimulated with waves of electricity and would be able to compose music like Beethoven's, or like Verdi's, whatever was wanted. He explained how people could have their intelligence and their talents and preferences and desires built into them, in judicious amounts; why not? (p. 241)

Jerry is on the side of technological development and probably will be a scientist and have a hand in that development. Del's mother talks enthusiastically with Jerry about "laboratory-created life, or machines taking over man" while Del's response to all this is "conventional horror, tentative female reasonableness" (p. 197, p. 195). Del in her world of passion, romance, and fiction judges that "what he said [was] unimportant even if true " (p. 241). Truth for her lies in literature.

Art Chamberlain reads the news on the Jubilee radio station, and perhaps because of his job, which is a glamorous one in a small town, he becomes part of Del's sexual fantasies.[4] His role is one of necessary observer: "His presence was essential but blurred; in the corner of my daydream he was featureless but powerful, humming away electrically like a blue fluorescent light " (p. 152). Ironically, it is Chamberlain who uses Del as a necessary observer at his sexual performance. He seems odd to Del because his eyes are pretty but expressionless, and his body seems strangely absent:

> his body . . . did not in any way disturb his clothes but seemed to be made of the same material as they were . . . Even Uncle Benny . . . had some look or way of moving that predicted chance or intended violence, something that would make disorder; my father had this too, though he was so moderate in his ways. Yet it was Mr. Chamberlain . . . who had been in the war, he had been in the Tank Corps. (pp. 146-47)

Chamberlain is the most violent of all the men, the only one who had been in the war. He, with others, wantonly destroyed a cookhouse on the last day of the war, for instance. In the war he operated a tank and now works with the electronic media. He is presented as being unnatural, plastic,and passionless—a man who is comfortable with technology but unable to commit himself to a woman.

As a contrast to these two men there are Uncle Benny, Ben Jordan (Del's father), and Garnet French. Benny is associated with nature as are Jordan and Garnet. His place is in the country: "To his way of thinking the river and the bush and the whole of Grenoch Swamp more or less belonged to him, because he knew them, better than anybody else did " (pp. 1-2). He is associated with the smell of "fish, furred animals, swamp" which is a smell that Del rather likes (p. 9). Benny believes in the existence of the supernatural world and is extremely superstitious:

> alongside our world was Uncle Benny's world like a troubling distorted reflection, the same but never at all the same. In that world people could go down in quicksand, be vanquished by ghosts or terrible ordinary cities; luck and wickedness were gigantic and unpredictable; nothing was deserved, anything might happen; defeats were met with crazy satisfaction. (p. 26)

Benny represents the irrational in man and serves as a foil to Ada Jordan, that most rational of women.

Del's father is a "halfway man" who likes living on the Flats

Road:

> He had been raised (like my mother, but she had cast all that behind her) on a farm deep in the country; but he did not feel at home there either, among the hard-set traditions, proud poverty, and monotony of farm life. The Flats Road would do for him. (p. 8)

He is first a fox farmer, then a chicken farmer. Like her mother before her, Ada abandoned her education to marry a farmer. Once Ada and the children move into Jubilee for the school year, Jordan and Uncle Benny are left in the country in "smelly bachelor comfort" (p. 70). Without Ada and Del to keep things clean and civilized, Jordan's house becomes "so dirty that it no longer had to be a house at all; it was like some sheltered extension of the out-of-doors. . . . The whole place smelled of fox" (p. 109). After the family moves into town, Del's father seems to play a small part in her life. Because of her intellectual interests, he seems to approve of Del and yet be offended in some way by her (p. 227). He has more affinity with his son who comes to live with him when he is about fourteen. Owen "cultivate[s] churlishness" and wants to quit school (p. 197). Like his father, he is not an intellectual and has a "simple, ignorant, masculine contempt" for Jerry and for Ada's enthusiasm over Jerry. To Owen and his father "Jerry was a freak, shut out of the world of men," Del thinks (p. 197). The world of men seems by definition here to mean anti-intellectual and close to nature. At one point Del has a dream about her father wanting to cut off the heads of his family "for their own good": "I was paralyzed by this reasonableness, the arrangements so simple and familiar and taken for granted, the reassuring face of insanity" (pp. 112-13). The connection of insanity with excessive rationality is not a new one, but it is surprising that Del has this dream about her father rather than about her mother. However, if the cutting off of heads is seen as an act against reason, the apparently paradoxical action becomes totally in character for the father.

Perhaps as a reaction against reason Del chooses to cut off her own head and to love Garnet French who is dark, anti-intellectual, and a rather "primitive" man. Ada warns her daughter against this garage mechanic of little education and no culture.[5] Del and Garnet seem to have nothing in common and get together because each hides part of his/her personality from the other: "he rearranged me, took just what he needed to suit himself. I did that with him. I loved the dark side, the strange side, of him, which I did not know" (p. 217). The regenerate Baptist masks a man of violence, and Del is fascinated by it. Del never talks to Garnet about intellectual matters as she does with Jerry (Garnet is Jerry's antithesis in almost every way) and, in fact, Garnet seems no more than a sex-object to her:

> any attempts to make him think in this way, to theorize, make systems, brought a blank, very slightly offended, and superior look into his face. He hated people using big words, talking about things outside of their own lives. He hated people trying to tie things together. (p. 217)

Del admits that she pays "attention to the life of his instincts, never to his ideas. . . . Nothing that could be said by us would bring us together; words were our enemies " (p. 217). In their relationship there seems to be nothing besides physical attraction:

> It was all I could do to read the words on a billboard, when we were driving. It was the very opposite of going out with Jerry, and seeing the world dense and complicated but appallingly unsecretive; the world I saw with Garnet was something not far from what I thought animals must see, the world without names. (p. 218)

What Del has here is the kind of relationship that the narrator of Surfacing has, or wants to have, with Joe. In the "baptizing" episode

Del herself surfaces and realizes the nature of their relationship:

> it seemed to me impossible that he should not understand that all the powers I granted him were in play . . . that I meant to keep him sewed up in his golden lover's skin forever . . . I saw that he knew it all already; this was what he knew, that I had somehow met his good offerings with my deceitful offerings, whether I knew it or not, matching my complexity and play-acting to his true intent. (pp. 234-35)

> I had thought I wanted to know about him but I hadn't really, I had never really wanted his secrets or his violence or himself taken out of the context of that peculiar and magical and, it seemed now, possibly fatal game. (p. 235)

Del could have lost this game of love which was really a game of power; it could have been fatal to her. As it is, she is strong enough to make the painful break with Garnet and "get started on [her] real life" at a job in the city (p. 238). Garnet French is not her "real life," she has come to realize, and she is able to direct her life away from total involvement with a "primitive" man in a way her mother and grandmother were not able to do (although it should be noted that these women had their own partial escape from their men in encyclopedic knowledge and religious fanaticism). There is no indication that Del's rejection of Garnet, however, is a rejection of that part of life that he represents; she simply sees that her "real life" must include more than what he represents. Perhaps what she is after is a balance between reason and passion, between the rather extreme reliance on technology that her mother and Jerry advocate and the passionate, instinctual life that Garnet represents. For her, "real life" must contain more than the attractions of romantic pastoral.

7.3 Technology is important in a few of Munro's stories. Sometimes it is used to show a character's social and/or financial position. In addition, the characters who are identified with technology often appear to have a special glamour. There is no evidence here that any of the characters exhibit nostalgia for past technologies which is common in pastoralism.

It seems that, although Alice Munro's short stories are not actually pastoral, about half of them are useful in a study of pastoralism. A few stories deal with the importance of technology (especially the car) and the glamour that accrues to the individual who is associated with technology. There is, however, no nostalgia for superseded technology in these stories. Others tell of the tension between reason and passion, or put in another way, between system and accident -- a conflict that is often a feature of pastoral literature. A third group deals with the change in values, a change that is made evident by the conflict between the old and the new and by the desire of some of the characters to hold on to the old at all costs. Some stories in this group show that childhood is not necessarily a time of innocence and old age a time of nostalgia and that, although nostalgia for the past is a prevalent and perhaps unavoidable human emotion, solidarity with past values can be ignorant and harmful. These stories deal with pastoral ideology without being pastoral themselves.

The social significance of technology is important in Munro's fiction. In Lives of Girls and Women, to return briefly to that novel, Ada's '37 Chev is crucial to her independence and shows her trust in technology in everyday terms. Art Chamberlain makes his escape from Fern's demands in his Pontiac. Garnet's truck serves as a mobile bedroom for Del and himself, and when Naomi tells Del of her pregnancy and hastily-planned wedding to a Bell Telephone lineman, her most self-pitying statement concerns her second-last boyfriend: "He has got a new Plymouth, now that I quit going out with him" (p. 229). In "The Peace of Utrecht" the ritual of Saturday night in town complete with "parking" on the main street is recalled by two sisters. Mrs. Gannett's car in "Sunday Afternoon" indicates her wealth and the freedom of movement it gives her. In "An Ounce of Cure" a car is seen as essential to adolescent independence and to dating and romance in the 1950's. Owning or having the use of a car is the "in" thing and separates the men from the boys. The fifteen year-old narrator knows girls who know

> boys who had quit school or been imported into town to play on the hockey team. She [Kay] and Joyce rode around in these boys' cars, and sometimes went with them--having lied of course to their mothers--to the Gay-la dance hall on the highway north of town.[6]

This girl sometimes babysits for the Berrymans who are newcomers to the town and have a different lifestyle from the one the "natives" live. Mr. Berryman is a plant manager of the new door-factory in town, and he and his wife often drive to the next town, a livelier one, for dinner and entertainment. After her "debauch" while babysitting at the Berryman home, the state of the narrator's reputation is indicated by the silence of her telephone: she "had at the same time one of the most silent telephones and positively the most sinful reputation in the whole High School" (p. 87).

In "Thanks for the Ride" both Dick and George are young men from the city. Being without a car makes George "touchy and dissatisfied" so he latches on to his cousin who has a little money and the use of his father's car. (Dance of the Happy Shades, p. 46) When George picks up Adelaide in the café at a small resort town, the second thing she says is, "You got a car?" and the first thing Lois's mother (Lois is the second pick-up) says when they stop at her house is, "That's a nice car you got out front. Is that your car?" (p. 48, p. 50). Obviously owning a car is very important to these people. To Lois's mother a car and other "nice things" are a sign of social and financial status. Dick's father is a chartered accountant and so can afford a car. Lois's father was killed several years previously in a mill accident so her family doesn't have nice things. Her mother seems proud of the gravity of the accident, however, as though a great and unusual misfortune is the only thing she has to display. Lois's father's head was cut off in the accident, her mother tells Dick and George with relish: "Clean off, imagine, and rolled on the floor! Couldn't open the coffin. . . . I guess it was the worst accident ever took place in this town" (p. 51). The mother is also interested to know if Dick's "folks" have a summer cottage. If they did, that would be another mark of affluence and distinction: a cottage for pastoral holidays and a car to get there. Neither Lois nor her mother are likely ever to have either one. Lois is almost seventeen and had to quit school two years before to work at a sewing-machine at the local glove factory.

Once they can get away from Lois's mother, Dick and George park their car in a lane and use it as a mobile bedroom--that is, George and Adelaide do while Dick and Lois go to a barn in the next field. "Thanks for the ride!" Lois calls out in a "loud, crude, female voice, abusive and forlorn" when the two women are finally deposited at home (p. 58). She could be saying that a sexual encounter for her is of no more importance than taking a ride in a car; or, more likely, she means it ironically and negatively and is suggesting that Dick has "taken her for a ride," that she has been used again--hence, "thanks for nothing!"

The story "How I met my Husband" is full of details about modern household technology, which seems very desirable to the fifteen year-old narrator, a farm girl who works for Dr. Peebles and his wife. They have bought an old house five miles out of town, and Edie comments, "It was just when the trend was starting of town people buying up old farms, not to work them but to live on them." (Something I've been Meaning to Tell You, p. 45). They are people who live in the country but don't live off the land. To a real farm girl some of their ideas seem outlandish. For instance, they like to eat outdoors in the yard "in spite of bugs. One thing strange to anybody from the country is this eating outside" (p. 57). Real country people get too much of the outdoors in their work to want to eat outside.[7] At least Dr. Peebles is a veterinarian and works with farm animals; as for Mrs. Peebles, the country seems to exist only for picnics. She has a completely unrealistic view of the country and rural life. It is obvious that Mrs. Peebles has never lived on a farm and has a low opinion of farmers. When Chris Watters lands his red and silver plane near their place, everyone runs out and Mrs. Peebles scolds them by saying, "Let's go back in the house. Let's not stand here gawking like a set of farmers" (p. 45).

Edie is from the "real" country and is extremely impressed with Mrs. Peebles' kitchen and bathroom. The kitchen has white appliances and fluorescent lights, and Edie is delighted with the modern domestic technology: "I loved light. I loved the double sink. So would anybody new-come from washing dishes in a dishpan with a rag-plugged hole on an oilcloth-covered table by light of a coal-oil lamp" (p. 48). And bathing in the pink bathroom is so delightful that Edie limits her baths to one a week so that she won't wear out her joy in the event.

There are only two children in the Peebles family (the busy-body neighbour woman who has a large family credits that to sinful birth control devices), and in Edie's opinion, there is hardly any work at all because of the automatic washer and dryer and other miraculous appliances. Edie comes from a home where her mother has to heat the water, use a wringer washer and an outdoor clothesline, and is expected to do barnwork and raise a large family in addition to doing housework. (Now, at the time she is recalling her past, Edie too has such appliances in her own house and takes their help for granted.) However, in spite of such a relatively meagre work load, Mrs. Peeble feels "tied down, with the two children, out in the country" and feels she needs a hired girl(p. 47). Because cars are in short supply after World War II, she doesn't have one of her own and feels trapped and bored in the country. She has no real work to do, and what work there is Edie does so it is no wonder that Mrs. Peebles feels bored. She tells Watters that sometimes "she was almost bored enough to try anything herself, she wasn't brought up to living in the country" (p. 55).

Perhaps Mrs. Peebles sees a dissatisfied kindred spirit in Chris Watters. He has been in the War and learned to fly a plane then; now he can't settle down to ordinary life. His fiancée is on his trail, but he manages to keep one step ahead of her and thus, like the radio announcers that are sprinkled throughout Munro's novel and stories, avoids the commitment of marriage. Alice's car can't go as fast as his plane and must stick to the roads. His plane gives him a glamour that no other man in Edie's life has--the modern equivalent of a man on horseback perhaps.[8] Before he gives Alice the slip once more, he promises to write to Edie.

He never does, and Edie is sensible enough to realize that she won't spend her life waiting for that letter or waiting for that glamorous airman to return. She dates the mail delivery man for three years, marries him, has children, and never lets on that the man in the airplane meant something special to her. There is no evidence, however, that Edie (like the characters in "Thanks for the Ride" and the other stories mentioned) has any nostalgia for outmoded technology. She relates the events of the past without nostalgia, is satisfied with her present life, and would not want a return of the man in the airplane to disrupt that life.

7.4 *Other stories by Munro tell of the tension between reason and passion or between system and accident. Such a conflict can be a feature of pastoralism. Munro shows that reason and civilization put restraints on passion, a restraint that is often a façade.*

In "Sunday Afternoon", Alva, who is another girl from the "real" country, learns that passion often lurks beneath the façade of civilization. Mrs. Gannett, her employer, is a civilized, "synthetic," urban woman somewhat in the style of Nile in Lives of Girls and Women: she "had a look of being made of entirely synthetic and superior substances" and Alva envies her. (Dance of the Happy Shades, p. 163) It is ironic that such a synthetic, mechanical woman gets to live on a park-like estate and owns a whole island in Georgian Bay. It is the family wealth rather than any appreciation of nature that makes owning such environments possible: "A whole island that they owned; nothing in sight that was not theirs. The rocks, the sun, the pine trees, and the deep, cold waters of the Bay" (p. 169). In the city they live in a rich suburb that has curving streets with no sidewalks (it is assumed that each person will have a car and never need or wish to walk anywhere) and that has each house well set back in a park-like landscape. The front yard is only for decoration and prestige; no one spends time there but the gardeners. In a letter to her family Alva marvels at the perfection of the lawns. In fact, everything seems perfect--and false:

> In spite of the heat, there was no blur on the day, up here; everything--the stone and white stucco houses, the flowers, the flower-coloured cars--looked hard and glittering, exact and perfect. There was no haphazard thing in sight. The street, like an advertisement, had an almost aggressive look of bright summer spirits. (pp. 166-67)

Underneath this façade of perfection are all sorts of suppressed feelings. Mr. Vance often gets drunk, and on this particular Sunday afternoon he stands very close to Alva but not quite touching her. Alva notices that "there was some instability in the situation of the Vances; Alva was not sure what it was" (p. 165).

Even when the Gannetts go camping, they take their synthetic, mechanical perfection with them: "They go out and rough it every once in a while but that is all very complicated and everything has to be just so. It is like that with everything they do and everywhere they go," Alva writes in her letter (p. 167). Alva has been promised the chance to go to the Island, but she sees herself as being as much out of her element there as she is in the Gannett city home. There is nothing for her here, and she is not comfortable with them:

> She filled the sink, got out the draining rack again and began to wash glasses. Nothing was the matter, but she felt heavy, heavy with the heat and tired and uncaring, hearing all around her an incomprehensible faint noise--of other people's lives, of boats and cars and dances--and seeing this street, that promised island, in a harsh and continuous dazzle of sun. She could not make a sound here, not a dint. (p. 170)

Mrs. Gannett's cousin, unlike Mr. Vance who is "the sort of man she was used to being respectful to," makes advances to Alva while she washes the glasses (p. 164). This makes her feel more comfortable--as though she thinks, "Oh, they're human after all! They're like people back home, and not 'sappy' every minute caring about their weedless lawns and not much else." This man seems to be interested in something Alva thinks important:

> This stranger's touch had eased her; her body was simply grateful and expectant, and she felt a lightness and confidence she had not known in this house. So there were things she had not taken into account, about herself, about them, and ways of living with them that were not so unreal. (p. 170)

The Island seems more appealing to her now when she finds out that the cousin has been invited too: "She saw it differently now; it was even possible that she wanted to go there" (p. 171). Sun, rocks, and trees are not enough for her to view the wilderness as desirable and positive; she needs the promise of sex to make it a pastoral paradise. And it is a relief to her to find out that underneath the façade of civilization and respectability are emotions that she can recognize.

"Winter Wind" is another story about civilization and the restraints it puts upon passion. The narrator is a high-school girl who lives "at the edge of the bush." (Something I've been Meaning to Tell You, p. 192) When it storms, the schoolbus cannot take her home, and she must stay with her grandmother in town. Grandmother's house is near the edge of town and near the railway tracks which seem to mark the boundary of civilization: "Like Siberia, my grandmother said, offended, you would think we were living on the edge of the wilderness. It was all farms, of course, and tame bush, no wilderness at all, but winter buried the fence posts" (p. 192). The fence posts, too, mark boundaries, and boundaries are a mark of civilization which the snow obliterates. During the storm, however, civilization holds up better in the town than it can in the country:

> A blizzard in town hardly seemed like a blizzard to me; so much was blocked out by the houses and the buildings. . . . Here were the streets leading into one another, the lights evenly spaced, a human design that had taken root and was working. (p. 197)

Just as the winter wind obliterates the physical marks of civilization, so does it make a break in the "civilized" exterior of the grandmother. The death of a girlhood friend in the blizzard brings back memories of the grandmother's youth, a youth that the granddaughter has long speculated about. When she was young, the grandmother had been angry at the man she loved and married another. Although the grandmother's behavior never bore it out, the narrator believes that the old woman was "stubbornly, secretly, destructively romantic": "that would be my grandmother's choice, that self-glorifying dangerous self-denying passion, never satisfied, never risked, to last a lifetime" (p. 201, p. 200). In denying passion the woman built her façade of "civilization": "My grandmother had schooled herself, watched herself, learned what to do and say; she had understood the importance of acceptance" (p. 206).

The death of the woman in the blizzard, which occurred because she was determined to remain independent, and the granddaughter's determination to return home in spite of the blizzard, reduce the old woman to angry tears. The grandmother can see why the girl wants to go home; it is a place where civilization is at a minimum and the winter wind can howl freely. The grandmother has such a clean and orderly house compared to her daughter-in-law's house where "dirt and chaos threatened all the time" (p. 193). In a town where success is measured in terms of new cars and dishwashers rather than happiness, the grandmother's efforts to keep everything ironed and polished are valued. The girl finds the order a relief at first, but after several days the tidiness, courtesy, and restraint become wearing. At home there is "confusion and necessity" but freedom in spite of the hard work and discomfort and the ill and cranky mother. She loves to read but,

> at my grandmother's books could not quite get out. Some atmosphere of the place pushed them back, contained them, dimmed them. There was not room. At home, in spite of all that was going on, there was room for everything. (p. 203)

There is no room for imagination at grandmother's place. She has stifled it along with her youthful passion and now must be satisfied with the achievement of civilized restraint.

Like the narrator's mother in "Winter Wind", Eileen, the narrator of "Memorial", is also an untidy person with an untidy life. She flies to Vancouver for her nephew's funeral and feels completely useless and out of place in her sister's house:

> In June's kitchen she tried all the time to remember the order, the always logical, though unexpected, classifications. She always made a mistake. . . . In June's and Ewart's house she felt all the time the weight of the world of objects, their serious demands, the distinctions she had disregarded. There was a morality here of buying and use, a morality of consumerism. (Something I've been Meaning to Tell You, p. 210)

In June's house Eileen feels paralyzed, unable to help, because everything is so organized and systematic, so alien to her own messy life. June is a super-efficient person who lives by the clock and according to plan. Even going to pornographic movies is no joke for June and Ewart, Eileen comments; nothing is--everything is part of a plan:

> Here was a system of digestion which found everything to its purposes. It stuck at nothing. Japanese gardens, pornographic movies, accidental death. All of them

> accepted, chewed and altered, assimilated, destroyed. (p. 216)

Eileen sees that nothing is left alone or left unexplained. When friends gather at June's house after the memorial service, reflected in the living room window "against the rainy dark she [Eileen] saw them all so bright and sheltered. She saw the carpet of lights which was the city, the strip of blackness which was the water" (p. 218). In the contrast of light and dark, the man-made and the natural, she sees the difference between the comprehensible and the incomprehensible.

June had studied psychology "to get round the problem of their mother" who had an illness that made their young lives unusual, to work it out and finish with it (p. 213). Perhaps June thinks that to understand her past is to control it and that the science of psychology will aid such control. Eileen is different:

> I have not worked through anything, Eileen thought. And further: I do not believe things are there to be worked through. . . . Illness and accidents. They ought to be respected, not explained. Words are all shameful. They ought to crumble in shame. (p. 221)

Eileen is an English teacher and thus works with and values words, but she admits that sometimes silence is the best. However, June is not so much in control as it appears; she needs two sleeping pills to get to sleep that night and next morning she does talk to Eileen about her son's freak car accident.

Also, Eileen catches Ewart watering his shrubs even though it has just rained: "You can't depend on the rain being enough," he explains (p. 222). She and her brother-in-law make love in the car in the garage, and she is able to include this encounter in her life because "she could shift her expectations around enough to make room for it" (p. 223).

Eileen speculates:

> What Eileen meant to Ewart . . . was confusion. The opposite of June, wasn't that what she was? . . . Eileen is aimless and irresponsible, she comes out of the same part of the world accidents come from. He lies in her to acknowledge, to yield--but temporarily, safely--to whatever has got his son, whatever cannot be spoken of in his house. (p. 224)

But Eileen doesn't know if this is anything more than an analysis or an explanation after the fact, an arranging for herself of the events so that her own life makes a kind of sense. She does admit that she always makes her visits with June and Ewart into funny stories for her friends, and that might be her way of getting control over a situation. Funny stories, and art too, can be used as a technique of manipulation and control over the accidental and random in life.

"Winter Wind" and "Memorial" are perhaps Munro's most pastoral stories. It seems that the author wants us to take sides with sexual passion against excessive civilized restraint. We pity the grandmother in "Winter Wind" for her almost perfect achievement of restraint, and we are relieved to see that June's and Ewart's restraint are not total. However, although in "Sunday Afternoon" the super-civilized, synthetic life of people like Mrs. Gannett seems false, there is no hint that sun and sex on the Georgian Bay island is the "cure" for such a life. Sex in nature as the solution for all the ills of modern industrialized and urbanized society is an idea that would fit perfectly into the romantic pastoral pattern, but Munro's story doesn't fit that pattern.

7.5 *Contrary to what we expect in pastoral literature, in Munro's fiction childhood is not necessarily a time of innocence and old age a time of nostalgia.*

An interesting thing about Alice Munro's fiction is that childhood is not a time of innocence and old age not a time of nostalgia.

Alva, although no longer a child, seems never to have been innocent. The same could be said of Del Jordan, too. In "Executioners" the narrator, an old woman of almost sixty-five, lives on the eighteenth floor of an apartment building in a large city--a far cry from the farmhouse near a small town that she remembers from her childhood. Although this is a story about childhood, it has no trace of nostalgia. Remembering the sexual taunts of Howard Troy and his subsequent death in a fire makes Helena face up to her feelings of guilt; her memories, which she has long suppressed, serve as a kind of expiation rather than a nostalgic trip into her past. (Something I've been Meaning to Tell You, p. 155) As a child, Helena imagined the most horrible punishments and tortures for Howard. She has a good idea who set the fire and never tells anyone, and now there is no one to tell, and all these years later she is still haunted by the image of Howard running into the burning house to save his father. Perhaps she feels as much an executioner as those who actually set the fire to kill Howard's father because she had, in her mind, tortured and killed Howard in far worse ways many times and wasn't sorry when he was dead.

"Walking on Water" is another story about an elderly person, a man in this case. What is interesting here is his response to the pseudo-pastoralism of the hippies he observes. Mr. Lougheed, a retired druggist, remarks drily, "What he objected to in this generation . . . was that they could not do a thing without showing off. . . . They could not grow a carrot without congratulating themselves on it." (Something I've been Meaning to Tell You, p. 71) (He views their public display of sexual activity in the same way.) The old man had liked to go to a store where vegetables with dirt still on them, looking natural and newly out of the soil, not all washed and polished, could be bought. These vegetables reminded him of the ones that were available when he was a child; however, he had stopped going to this special store because he was put off by the fake-poor clothes of the young people there and their "pious discussions of gardening and food." He thinks that "they took too much praise on themselves. Bread had been baked before, turnips had been harvested before. This was artificial, in some way it was more artificial than the supermarkets" (p. 71). All this had been done before but not made into a religion, and in his opinion this back-to-the-land trend is artificial and won't last. He recalls an incident that does a great deal to explain his attitude to these young people:

> He had grown up on a farm and could not help passing such judgments on all forms of plant and animal life. He remembered some visitor to the farm, a lady, not young, crying out over the beauty of a field full of wild mustard. She wore a kind of dusty pink or beige hat, chiffon, if that was the stuff, and the conspicuous folly of the hat blended with the folly of her pleasure, in his mind, and had remained to this day. (p. 79)

To a farmer or a farm boy wild mustard in a field is not a thing of beauty and a joy forever; it is an obnoxious weed that reduces the yield of the crop. Eugene, an older hippy, agrees that the younger people are boring in the same way the early Christians would have been boring; they take themselves too seriously. However, Eugene is not a rationalist like Mr. Lougheed; the younger man believes in psychic, non-material powers and intends to prove that he can leave his own body by walking on water. As the story ends the young man has vanished, and the old one is left having to face the possibility that more than reason is needed to explain some things.

Dorothy in "Marrakesh" is much like Mr. Lougheed in age and outlook. Her granddaughter, Jeanette, a "new type of adult who appeared to have discarded adulthood" at age thirty, is the pastoralist. (Something I've been Meaning to Tell You, p. 160) The old woman, whom we might expect to be full of nostalgia for the past, is not. Dorothy sits on her porch, which is hot and shabby because all the diseased elm trees had to be cut down. She is not happy about it but sees that is was necessary. Jeanette is angry:

> "The same thing that's happening everywhere," Jeanette cut in on her, hardly listening. "It's all part of the same destruction. The whole country is turning into a junkyard."
>
> Dorothy could not agree. She could not speak for the country but this town was hardly turning into a junkyard. In fact the Kinsmen had recently drained and cleared a waste area by the river and turned it into a very nice park, something the town had been lacking in its entire hundred years. She understood that Dutch elm disease had wiped out all the elm trees in Europe during the last century and had been making headway across this continent for fifty years. God knows the scientists had worked hard enough looking for a cure. She felt compelled to point all this out. Jeanette smiled wanly, yes, but you don't know what's happening, it's everywhere, technology and progress are destroying the quality of life. (p. 161)

Dorothy thinks that Jeanette always takes "a black view": "Adolescent was the word that came to her mind, but that did not explain enough " (p. 162). Because she remembers that when she was young she had felt the same way, Dorothy doesn't scold her granddaughter. With Dorothy the cause had not been elm trees; she

> had flung herself down in the grass . . . howling and weeping . . . Because her father and her brothers were replacing a fence, a crooked old mossy rail fence, with barbed wire! . . . How she hated change, then, and clung to old things, old mossy rotten picturesque things. (p. 162)

Munro seems to be suggesting that nostalgia (and pastoralism) affects younger people more than old people who have, indeed, more to be nostalgic about. This is a reversal of what we expect, but maybe it is the young who want and need constancy and familiarity in their surroundings and feel cheated and angry if things change.

Dorothy is a very open and accepting person (perhaps this is a sign of maturity and a growth away from adolescence), although she does know the difference between beauty and ugliness:

> if those houses [that she has been looking at for forty years from her own house across the street] were all pulled down, their hedges and vines and vegetable plots and apple trees and whatnot obliterated, and a shopping center put up in their place, she would not turn her back. No, she would sit just as now, looking out, looking not emptily but with strong curiosity at the cars and pavement and flashing signs and flat-roofed stores and the immense, curved, dominating shape of the supermarket. Anything would do for her to look at; beautiful or ugly had ceased to matter, because there was in everything something to be discovered. (pp. 162-63)

The older she gets the more interesting the changing world appears to her. Mr. Lougheed has the same response; he decides, too, that "whatever he learned here, he was not sorry to have learned"; and if he has to move "into an apartment building, like the rest" of the old people, he will cope with that too (p. 80, p. 92).

7.6 *Another group of Munro's stories deals with the change in values that is made evident by a change in technology and a change in lifestyles. Two typically pastoral attitudes that result in answer to technological change are the romanticizing of outmoded technologies and the desire to hold on to the past at all costs.*

As we have seen in "Marrakesh", technological change is difficult to accept, and one of the most common responses to change is the romanticizing of past technology. The world of "Walker Brothers Cowboy" is one of woodstoves, treadle sewing-machines, and radio serials. The narrator measures her father's age in terms of technology. Ben Jordan has lived, like her, a very little time compared to how long the earth has existed:

"He has not known a time, any more than I, when automobiles and electric lights did not at least exist." (Dance of the Happy Shades, p. 3) Her father is a bankrupt fox farmer who has turned to selling to make a poor living. The family now lives in a house that has running water, a bathtub, and flush toilet, in a town that has milk in bottles (although no home refrigerators yet) and two movie theatres. In the country there are chamber pots and water in pails instead. Even though Jordan goes from farm to farm selling his products in an Essex "long past its prime," he likes to think of himself as a cowboy (p. 8).[9] He has made up a song about himself, "The Walker Brothers Cowboy," but he has a car instead of a horse and his work is quite different from a cowboy's. The dangers are different too. A chamberpot emptied out of an upstairs window is not the kind of thing a cowboy had to cope with. The farms he visits on his rounds are anything but pastoral; they are "flat, scorched, empty" and have no animals around (p. 7). The hopelessness and poverty of the Depression are effectively put in terms of technology that doesn't work. In some farm yards are old cars, often past running, often rusty and dismantled. In other yards are "unturning windmills" (p. 9). In the midst of all this misery Jordan tries to keep his dignity by thinking of himself as a cowboy, and shows his nostalgia for an outmoded way of life. Obviously, if he could, he would choose to work with foxes or horses and cows; but in a world of automobiles and electric lights such work is no longer needed.

The outmoded technology of the horse is one of the subjects of "Boys and Girls." The girl narrator tells herself stories before she goes to sleep at night, stories of courage, boldness, and self-sacrifice. One of them consists of riding a horse down the main street of Jubilee:

> I rode a fine horse spiritedly down the main street of Jubilee, acknowledging the townspeople's gratitude for some yet-to-be-worked-out piece of heroism (nobody ever rode a horse there, except King Billy in the Orangemen's Day parade). There was always riding and shooting in these stories, though I had only been on a horse twice--bareback because we did not own a saddle--and the second time I had slid right around and dropped under the horse's feet; it had stepped placidly over me. I really was learning to shoot, but I could not hit anything yet, not even tin cans on fence posts. (Dance of the Happy Shades, pp. 113-14)

Perhaps the girl is being nostalgic for past technologies, typically masculine ones in this case. She seems to be taking real activities and embellishing them in her mind to make her life seem more exciting and glamorous, but in relating the story she is not carried away by nostalgia and manages to keep the real and the imagined events separate. Since she grew up before the age of TV, she was probably influenced by movies and wild west stories to think that riding and shooting were necessary constituents of a glamorous and exciting life. A large part of the reality of her childhood on the farm, however, is that the foxes her father raises are fed horsemeat. Her glamorous image of riding a fine horse is far from the real use of horses on their farm. Farmers were buying tractors at this time and selling their old horses to people like Ben Jordan who had a use for them. Like The Studhorse Man this story tells of the end of the time when horses were considered a useful and dignified farm animal.

The narrator fights against change; she wants to hold on to her idealized image of the horse, and she wants her own freedom as a "tomboy" to remain unchanged. When her concern for Flora overwhelms her reason, she helps the horse escape:

> I could not understand why I had done it. Flora would not really get away. They would catch up with her in the truck. Or if they did not catch her this morning somebody would see

> her and telephone us this afternoon or tomorrow. There was no wild country here for her to run to, only farms. What was more, my father had paid for her, we needed the meat to feed the foxes, we needed the foxes to make our living. . . . I was on Flora's side, and that made me no use to anybody, not even to her. (p. 125)

The girl realizes that the country has changed; it is settled and cultivated everywhere now, and a horse has no room to run free. She also realizes that Flora's enemies are invincible; the men have telephones, trucks, and guns at their disposal. In addition, economic necessity makes the death of Flora a certainty. By trying to help the horse, the girl is in a way expressing her own futile rebellion against necessity and change, in this case her mother's and father's determination that she should "be a girl," a state of being that seems to her synonymous with lack of freedom and independence.

7.7 *Nostalgia for the past and solidarity with past values, although sometimes positive, can be ignorant and harmful; and yet such nostalgia seems to be an inevitable part of being human. Munro, however, seems to be saying that the past is kept in perspective by mature people, that nostalgia must be kept in check.*

Mary in "The Shining Houses", a young woman who has pastoral tendencies much like Jeanette's in "Marrakesh" or the narrator's in "Boys and Girls", is also resistant to change. She refuses to sign the petition that would enable the residents of a new suburb to have the house of the oldest resident destroyed. Most of the residents seem to be typical suburbanites: about thirty years old, parents of young children, and concerned about property values. Mrs. Fullerton does not fit; she is old, has no husband, lives alone in her shack. She has lived her life, whereas the other people around her have most of theirs yet to live. Her children wanted her to sell her place and live in rooms in the city, but she refused to give up her hens, goat, and freedom. She has lived here for fifty years, the last twelve alone. Twelve years ago her house was in the bush beyond the tramline, but since then the area has changed a great deal; the city has invaded the country. Mrs. Fullerton has cherries from her own trees to sell and eggs from her hens, but things are cheaper in the supermarket and her neighbours don't care to pay for freshness.

Everyone is against Mrs. Fullerton, but Mary finds that she secretly sides with the old woman. Mary is

> rather pleased with Mrs. Fullerton for being so unaccommodating. When Mary came out of this place, she always felt as if she were passing through barricades. The house and its surroundings were so self-sufficient, with their complicated and seemingly unalterable layout of vegetables and flower beds, apple and cherry trees, wired chicken-run, berry patch and wooden walks, woodpile, a great many roughly built dark little sheds, for hens or rabbits or a goat. Here was no open or straightforward plan, no order that an outsider could understand; yet what was haphazard time had made final. The place had become fixed, impregnable, all its accumulations necessary. (Dance of the Happy Shades, p. 22)

Mrs. Fullerton's house and yard are dirty, messy, and dark--a vivid contrast to the shining new suburban houses--but a part of the wilderness in a way the new ones never can be. Her world is individual; her order and plan are her own and no outsider can see beyond the mess. Before the new subdivision was imposed upon the wilderness, there existed a structured community of people living in harmony with nature, a harmony that the shining white houses have destroyed. The old community combined city and wilderness in a way that the suburbs never can:

> under the structure of this new subdivision, there was still something else to be seen; that was the old city, the old wilderness city that had lain on the side of the mountain. It had to be called a city because there were tramlines running into the woods, the houses had numbers and there were all the public buildings of a city, down by the water. But houses like Mrs. Fullerton's had been

> separated from each other by uncut forest and a jungle of wild blackberry and salmonberry bushes; these surviving houses, with thick smoke coming out of their chimneys, walls unpainted and patched and showing different degrees of age and darkening, rough sheds and stacked wood and compost heaps and grey board fences around them--these appeared every so often among the large new houses of Mimosa and Marigold and Heather Drive --dark, enclosed, expressing something like savagery in their disorder and the steep, unmatched angles of roofs and lean-tos; not possible on these streets, but there. (p. 24)

This savagery and disorder, however, is being suppressed and destroyed as fast as possible by the owners of the shining houses.

The road past Mrs. Fullerton's house used to be called Wicks Road--probably after its surveyor or the first person who lived on it. Now it is called Heather Drive which is a pretentious and false name--and meaningless because there is no heather there and won't be. Urban technology has invaded Mrs. Fullerton's bush territory and created a Garden Place, in this case ironically but hopefully named since no garden exists:

> The name of the subdivision was Garden Place, and its streets were named for flowers. On either side of the road the earth was raw; the ditches were running full. Planks were laid across the open ditches, planks approached the doors of the newest houses. The new, white and shining houses, set side by side in long rows in the wound of the earth. . . . Last year, just at this time, in March, the bulldozers had come in to clear away the bush and second-growth and great trees of the mountain forest; in a little while the houses were going up among the boulders, the huge torn stumps, the unimaginable upheavals of that earth. The houses were frail at first, skeletons of new wood. (pp. 22-23)

Soon roofs and siding were put on the frames, and the houses became real:

> The rooms were all large and light and the basements dry, and all this soundness and excellence seemed to be clearly, proudly indicated on the face of each house--those ingenuously similar houses that looked calmly out at each other, all the way down the street. (p. 23)

"Ingenuously" must be meant ironically. The houses are similar because it is cheaper to build them on a mass scale and they are meant for young couples with children, families who have lives as identical to each other as the houses are identical in appearance. It is cheaper and more efficient to service people who have similar interests and tastes--individuality is an expensive eccentricity.

The indigenous nature that exists in Garden Place is found undesirable by the new residents. On Saturdays all the men work on their yards trying to make order and beauty: "They worked with competitive violence and energy, all this being new to them; they were not men who made their living by physical work " (pp. 23-24). These people want to change the nature that is already there into grassy terraces, rock walls, shapely flower beds, and ornamental shrubs. They do not appreciate what is already there, probably because they have a picture in their minds, gained from reading too many "Homes and Gardens" magazines, of what the outdoors should look like. Also, they expect the conveniences of city living and are willing to sacrifice the landscape to get what they want: down with the pine trees and up with the shopping centre.

Mary's neighbours want Mrs. Fullerton and her house removed. At a meeting their conversation is like a river eddying "menacingly in familiar circles of complaint," menacing to Mary because she doesn't agree with them but doesn't know what to say (p. 25). They want Mrs. Fullerton to pull down some of her outbuildings or at least paint her house. Her next-door neighbours object to the smell of her chickens. The people across the street claim to keep their drapes drawn so visitors will not see Mrs. Fullerton's house through the window. Those who object to the old woman as neighbour have discovered that her house is on a lane allowance and that if they insist on a lane her house will have to be destroyed to conform with municipal law. Mary tries to object:

> "But remember she's been here a long time . . . She was here before most of us were born," [.] She was trying desperately to think of other words, words more sound and reasonable than these . . . But she had no argument. She could try all night and never find any words to stand up to their words, which came at her now invincibly from all sides: shack, eyesore, filthy, property, value. (p. 27)

Mary fears that anything she says to defend Mrs. Fullerton's right to exist as she has will sound romantic and silly. Her neighbours' defence of their decision to try to force the lane through is, "It's unfortunate. . . . But we have to think of the community " (p. 29). They, or course, have defined community to suit themselves and have decided that Mrs. Fullerton is not a part of it. Instead of coming as new arrivals and trying to fit into the old community, these people come as invaders and destroy the existing community. Mary's gesture of solidarity with the past, however romantic and pastoral that is in the context, is to refuse to sign the petition for the lane. As she walks home she sees

> the curtains being drawn across living-room windows; cascades of flowers, of leaves, of geometrical designs, shut off these rooms from the night. Outside it was quite dark, the white houses were growing dim, the clouds breaking and breaking, and smoke blowing from Mrs. Fullerton's chimney. The pattern of Garden Place, so assertive in the daytime, seemed to shrink at night into the raw black mountainside. (p. 29)

Mrs. Fullerton's house seems to fit better into the natural setting with its incomprehensible design; painting the house would make it fit less well. The residents of the shining white houses, however, prefer their nature as drapery patterns which they can pull across their windows in order to hide what is out there.

Although Mary's nostalgia for the past (and such nostalgia is the back-bone of pastoralism) and her determination--probably ineffectual--to preserve that past is seen as admirable in "The Shining Houses", a similar nostalgia for the past that the narrator's mother clings to in "Dance of the Happy Shades" is ignorant and harmful. The narrator of the story is a music student of old Miss Marsalles, and her mother before her was a student of the same teacher. The mothers of the present students hate to go to the annual piano recital but always do. The narrator says that these women

> were drawn together by a rather implausible allegiance--not so much to Miss Marsalles as to the ceremonies of their childhood, to a more exacting pattern of life which had been breaking apart even then but which survived, and unaccountably still survived, in Miss Marsalles' living room. . . . their mothers' faces wore the dull, not unpleasant look of acquiescence, the touch of absurd and slightly artificial nostalgia which would carry them through any lengthy family ritual. They . . . expressed a familiar, humorous amazement at the sameness of things . . . so they acknowledged the incredible, the wholly unrealistic persistence of Miss Marsalles and her sister and their life. (Dance of the Happy Shades, p. 215)

The mothers do not want the annual music ritual to change, and yet when Miss Marsalles does carry it on each year, they are amazed. But it isn't the old woman's persistence that is unrealistic; it is their desire for things of their childhood to remain the same that is "incredible" and and "wholly unrealistic."

Since the time that the narrator's mother took lessons, Miss Marsalles has had to move several times. No longer does she live in the gloomy family home in Rosedale. She has come down considerably in the world and now resides with her invalid sister on a poor street in half of a duplex, the other half serving as a confectionery. The reality of the situation is that two old spinsters have to live on very little money with no one to look after them. It seems that all the children who take lessons live with their parents in the suburbs and must be driven into the city; the mothers have little actual contact with Miss Marsalles, and their "help" consists of a refusal to talk about the poverty of her life. For instance, the narrator's mother thinks it hideous of Miss Marsalles' helpful neighbour to comment on the poor way Miss Marsalles has managed the food for the recital. Miss Marsalles cannot afford an air-conditioner, and the heat has ruined her punch, sandwiches, and ice cream. Needless to say, the mother has not offered her assistance.

Not only has Miss Marsalles' house changed, so have her students. Because she has only about six regular students who are daughters of former students (and these are on the verge of dropping out), she has had to find replacements where she can. The new students are retarded children. The flies on the food, the dried up sandwiches, a small cramped house in a poor area, a dirt yard instead of a garden are all bad enough; but when the retarded children troop in to play their pieces, it is absolutely clear that things are not as they used to be. After the recital the middle-class mothers and daughters drive home, "driving out of the hot red-brick streets and out of the city and leaving Miss Marsalles and her no longer possible parties behind, quite certainly forever," to their affluent lives in the suburbs (p. 224). Their lives are full of gadgets and comforts, but in a way they are shallow and empty compared to Miss Marsalles' life. The narrator seems to recognize this when she asks at the end of the story,

> why is it that we are unable to say--as we must have expected to say--Poor Miss Marsalles? It is the Dance of the Happy Shades that prevents us, it is the one communiqué from the other country where she lives. (p. 224)

Looking at Miss Marsalles' situation carefully one can judge her more fortunate, although materially poorer, than her middle-class students and their mothers; she has something that disallows pity. For one thing, she has the love of her new students, and one of them played _Danse des ombres heureuses_ beautifully. Miss Marsalles has at last found students worthy of her teaching.

The narrator's mother, on the other hand, seems to be a rather pathetic misguided creature who tries to live life as though it were capable of being wrapped in "mental cellophane." She has an extreme case of nostalgia for a past way of life, for her own pleasant and orderly childhood which she wants to perpetuate into the present. Protected by a comfortable, monied, suburban existence, she refuses to face up to the changes Miss Marsalles has had to endure in the city. She seems to want Miss Marsalles and her life to remain the same as she remembers it but offers no help except that of sending her daughter for lessons, a help that is soon to come to an end. In her own life she is probably willing to accept any sort of change that will make her life more comfortable, and yet for Miss Marsalles she wants a static existence as an embalmed figure placed forever amongst her memories of childhood and embedded in her nostalgia. The mother continually talks about how things were when she was the young music student but won't face up to the desperation old Miss Marsalles must feel in her situation and won't extend admiration for Miss Marsalles' ability to adapt, to keep her head above water, to retain her joy in music and in people, to be a survivor in the best sense of the word.

The phrase "mental cellophane," which is so apt in describing the narrator's mother's attitude in "Dance of the Happy Shades", comes from "The Peace of Utrecht". In this story Maddy and Helen, two sisters who have been apart for some years, talk about their childhood in the presence of a friend of Maddy's. Helen comments:

> we spent the evening . . . making this strange man a present of our childhood, or of that version of our childhood which is safely preserved in anecdote, as in a kind of mental cellophane. And what fantasies we build around the frail figures of our child-selves, so that they emerge beyond recognition incorrigible and gay. (Dance of the Happy Shades, p. 193)

Because of their mother's illness, their childhood was anything but incorrigible and gay, so they have rearranged their memories to make the past less painful to remember. Memories can be fabricated or at least embellished; reality can be turned into art. Perhaps that is what nostalgia and pastoralism are all about--a selective remembrance of things past turned into stories (either thought, spoken, or written) which serve as a "kind of mental cellophane."[10] Those stories (or pictures too) can then act as protection and escape from contamination by reality and even, on occasion, become reality itself. It seems that this tendency to turn memories of childhood into adult art is a major theme in Alice Munro's work thus far.

And as a final example of Munro's concern with pastoralism there is her story "Home". Here the narrator, on a visit home, notices that her stepmother has replaced the old kitchen table and chairs with plastic ones that look like wood. The house is now brightly lit because her father and Irlma grew up in a time of coal-oil lamps and have no nostalgia for dim light and strained eyes. The father is covering the crumbling red brick exterior with metal siding. The narrator says:

> I do not lament this loss as I would have done at one time. . . . if my father and Irlma . . . wish it [to] be comfortable, and--this word is used by them without quotation marks, quite simply and positively--modern, I am really not going to wail about the loss of a few charming bricks, a crumbling wall. But I am shy of

> letting my father see that the house does not mean to me what it once did, and that it really does not matter much to me how he changes it. . . . I don't tell him that I am not sure now if I love any place, any house, and that it seems to me it was myself I loved here, some self I have finished with, and none too soon. (pp. 135-36)

When the narrator was younger, she clung to the past; all the "charming bricks" of her childhood home meant a great deal to her then. Now they don't. Perhaps Munro means this "finishing with" the self in the past (and a growing away from nostalgia for past technologies, places, etc.) as a sign of maturity. In any case, the narrator feels that she has "used up" her home-town by writing about it until it now seems to have "faded" for her, all its "plentiful messages drained away " (p. 143). Now, as a mature adult, she can go on to use other material--maybe material that is more recent and not dependent on memories of childhood. Munro is suggesting, perhaps, that the pastoral impulse must be recognized, used, and finally set aside once adolescence is past.

CONCLUSION

Marshall McLuhan's observation that new technologies turn older environments into an art form is not an insight into a new phenomenon. It is an insight into what has probably always existed; but, because it relates pastoralism to technology, his observation serves as an illumination both of pastoralism and of works that are pastoral or related to pastoral. McLuhan considers pastoral literature as inferior to art which, for him, is works of discovery. If pastoral literature consisted only of simple pastoralism, then his judgement could stand. But, as it is, by introducing satire and irony into material of a pastoral nature, the author is probing and attempting an art of discovery. Other critics have called attention to the pastoral element in Canadian literature, but McLuhan's statement enables us to identify hitherto unnoticed or imperfectly perceived features of recent Canadian fiction. This study of pastoralism and technology in recent Canadian fiction is only a partial view of part of Canadian literature. The accounts given of the selected works that are dealt with in this thesis are by no means complete analyses and leave room for further investigation.[1]

NOTES

Preface

[1] Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man (New York: New Library, 1964), pp. viii-ix.

At one point in her latest novel Margaret Atwood has her heroine, Joan Foster, muse upon the personality and values of refrigerator owners:

> There was something to be said for refrigerators. Although they inspired waste, they created the illusion that there would always be a tomorrow, you could keep things in them forever. . . . Why had the media analysts never done any work on refrigerators? Those who had refrigerators surely perceived life differently from those who didn't. What the bank was to money, the refrigerator was to food. (Lady Oracle [Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976], p. 311)

The ownership of a refrigerator, like the possession and use of any tool, appliance or machine, says a great deal about the owner, about his relation with nature, and about the society in which he or she lives. Karl Marx said the same thing in other words:

> Technology discloses man's mode of dealing with Nature, the process of production by which he sustains his life, and thereby also lays bare the mode of formation of his social relations, and of the mental conceptions that flow from them. (Capital: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production, translated from the third German edition by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling and edited by Frederick Engels, I [Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1959], p. 372, footnote 3. All quotations from Marx are from this footnote.)

Once Darwin had written what Marx calls "the history of Nature's Technology," it occurred to Marx to wonder why someone had not done a "history of the productive organs of man" since it is probably of equal interest and importance. As a student of literature I have discovered that technology and its relationship to nature is an important aspect of the work of some authors, and especially interesting is pastoralism, a particular mental conception that can result from this relationship.

Once one has an eye on the "role of the refrigerator in Canadian literature" (as Atwood would humourously put it), one can profitably go on to examine the importance of cars, computers, film, telephones, airplanes, tape-recorders, and any other machine that an author cares to include. All these we commonly categorize under the term "technology" which can be defined as human devices that change man's environment and hence modify man's consciousness--the human devices that Marx called "productive organs of man." The origin of the word "technology" is the Greek word technologia which signifies "systematic treatment" and techne which means art or skill. Hence, when one talks about technology, one sometimes includes the concept of technique: as George Grant says, technology or "technique is ourselves. . . . [and] comes forth from and is sustained in our vision of ourselves as creative freedom, making ourselves, and conquering the chances of an indifferent world" (Technology and Empire: Perspectives on North America [Toronto: Anansi, 1969], p. 137). "Technology," when defined in this looser, extended way, consists not only of the devices that human beings use but also of the mode of use and the mental framework of the originator and user of each device--what Leonard Cohen calls System. This is why such concepts as time, history, civilization, reason, and even art are mentioned in the thesis.

[2] The pastoral originated in Theocritus's elegiac recollections of his boyhood in rural Sicily, and for us, according to Peter V. Marinelli,

> it has come to mean any literature which deals with the complexities of human life against a background of simplicity. All that is necessary is that memory and imagination should conspire to render a not too distant past of comparative innocence as more pleasurable than a harsh present, overwhelmed either by the growth of technology or the shadows of advancing age. . . . Either the machines have come into the garden, or the world of adult experience casts its long shadows. (Pastoral [London: Methuen, 1971], pp. 3-4)

This desire for a return to simplicity, even if only in imagination, is the essence of pastoralism. But once that is established, one can go on to discuss various large and small differences that can be found in different kinds of pastoral literature. In an attempt to understand pastoralism it is useful to divide it first into two main types: the classical and the romantic pastoral. Briefly, both have the underlying yearning for simplicity in the face of the complexities found in the life of any adult person. The prevailing mood in both types of pastoral is nostalgia: "the art of pastoral is the art of the backward glance" (Marinelli, p. 9). However, social comment or criticism is often implied by this backward glance. Because two sets of values (the old and the new) are constantly contrasted, pastoralism verges on satire; and because of the ambiguity that is sometimes inherent in each set of values, pastoral literature can have ironic overtones. The three ways of comparing the old and the new (the pastoral, the satirical, and the ironic) are related but are not identical.

The differences between classical and romantic pastoral are interesting and significant. The main difference is the type of landscape that is chosen. Whereas the landscape of classical pastoral is cultivated nature (the garden), the landscape of romantic pastoral is wild nature untouched (or relatively untouched) by human technology. Both types of landscape provide an escape from city and/or court, which are the places of artifice and sophistication. A second important difference is in characterization. The humble nature of the hero of pastoral is perhaps emphasized more in romantic pastoral than in classical pastoral; it is not likely in romantic pastoral that he would be a prince disguised as a shepherd--more likely he would be an actual shepherd (or man of the soil) doing a real shepherd's work. In this respect the shepherd of romantic pastoral harkens back to the beginnings of classical pastoral. But shepherds and sheep being in short supply, any "humble" rather than "noble" person will do as the hero of pastoral literature that is written now. Because of the emphasis on the simple goodness of the pastoral hero, the child is a frequent choice of the writer of romantic pastoral. The rituals that are associated with pastoral are common to both types, but the emphasis may be different. For example, pastoral literature, especially romantic pastoral, advocates freedom from the restraints of civilization, and sexual freedom often symbolizes all other kinds of freedom. Therefore, love-making is a frequent activity in pastoral literature. Artistic endeavours (telling stories, writing poetry, dancing, and singing) also seem to thrive in a pastoral landscape. It is because of the importance of artistic activities in pastoral literature that sometimes, instead of a hard-working shepherd, the writer will use an artist as his pastoral hero.

Dividing pastoralism into two types (classical and romantic) is one way of clarifying the concept. Another way would be to call both of these types "conventional pastoral" and contrast it with a new type of pastoral: "modern pastoral." Modern pastoralism puts an emphasis on the process by which the new technology converts the older environment along with its outmoded technology into art; that is, the technological horizon--a term I use to describe the imaginary line that separates a past environment and a new technology--is very prominent. Pastoralism deals essentially with an environment of symbols--or more accurately, with the contrast of two environments of symbols. The technological often provides the symbols for one set of values and ideas and the world of nature provides the other. This gives us one pastoral pattern: the conventional one. Another pattern, one suggested by McLuhan, uses technology as symbols of both sets of values and ideas: the contrast is between old and new technology. This second pattern might not be immediately recognized as pastoral, but it is pastoral because of the nostalgia for the outmoded technology and its related environment. In this case, in a world of modern, ever-changing technology, one longs not for trees and green grass necessarily but for the simpler technologies of the past.

[3]As I have said, the conventional pastoral pattern depends on the separation of technology and nature. Often, people are regarded as belonging with the things they have created (that is, technology) and are, thus, separated from nature. Related to this assumption that man can be divided from nature is the idea that he himself can be divided into two parts--one part to be included in the realm of nature and the other in the world of technology (and thus a possible enemy and destroyer of nature and the natural). Human characteristics are divided into two groups and labelled "passion" and "reason"; and some authors then embody such divided characteristics in "men (or women) of passion" and "men (and, very rarely, women) of reason." Wayland Drew, Robert Kroetsch, Margaret Atwood, Leonard Cohen and, to some extent, Alice Munro use characters of this type, characters that can be called "natural" men and "technological" men. The "natural" men are equivalent to the "humble" heroes of romantic pastoral.

The natural man of romantic pastoral, of course, lives in nature or is somehow associated with it. Nature in this case is wild, uncultivated nature rather than the garden of classical pastoral. Northrop Frye writes about the way nature has come to be seen in a romantic context:

> nature, though still full of awfulness and mystery, is the visible representative of an order that man has violated, a spiritual unity that the intellect murders to dissect. This form of the myth is more characteristic of the second phase of Canadian social development, when the conflict of man and nature is expanding into a triangular conflict of nature, society, and individual. Here the individual tends to ally himself with nature against society. (The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination [Toronto: Anansi, 1971], p. 245)

As rational or technological man has gained ascendency over nature, some people see nature as the victim of man and his technologies, and authors such as Drew, Kroetsch and, to some extent, Atwood have come to its defence. Their novels attempt to gain sympathy for nature and the natural man who are seen to be beset by powerful and often destructive new technologies. But after pointing out that the technological is not always the good and beneficial, they have sometimes gone to extremes and said that technology is never any good.

The condemnation of technology and the technological or rational man is often a part of romantic pastoralism and is prevalent in modern literature. The idea that technology is never any good is a stock literary attitude that operates by turning an object (usually some machine) into a metaphor or symbol. There has been a long tradition of the machine as symbol of the destruction of the emotional, psychological, or spiritual life and an even longer tradition of nature as the healer; but it could be that it is the economic system that developed at the same time as the Industrial Revolution that caused the morally neutral machine to be labelled as sinister and destructive and strengthened the myth of the organic and natural society that preceded it. As Raymond Williams points out in The Country and the City, the dichotomy between country and city with all that is good placed in the country is false. Such a myth is a source for the idea that it is urban industrialism rather than capitalism that harms us ([London: Chatto and Windus, 1973], p. 96).

Another aspect of this problem emerges when we catch ourselves wanting only "good" technology. The nature of the human mind seems to have a built-in duality wherein the positive implies the negative. So there is no way we can have only the positive aspects of a particular technology and not the negative; and once the technology exists, there is probably no way to eliminate it completely and live as though it never existed. Of course, this is not to say that there is no difference between wise and stupid ways of using technology. In a technological paradise, apparently, there would be no opposites to choose between (only the "good" would exist) or else the human mind would have to be totally different from what it is. To eliminate all the negative aspects of technology, we would have to eliminate human nature: the predicament is absolute. The writer of romantic pastoral refuses to see this.

However, such romanticism is possible only after considerable technological development and urbanization have already occurred. Consequently, this tendency to regard nature as vulnerable and good and the source of artistic inspiration and of healing for troubled spirits is probably comparatively recent in Canadian literature. For instance, in 1943 Northrop Frye commented that in comparison to poetry in the United States there was very little looking to nature for inspiration (what he calls "Tarzanism") in Canadian poetry. He said, "There has on the whole been little Tarzanism in Canadian poetry. One is surprised to find how few really good Canadian poets have thought that getting out of cities into God's great outdoors really brings one closer to the sources of inspiration" (The Bush Garden, p. 137). The reason for this is that the United States was urbanized earlier--hence, its writers turned to nature for inspiration sooner. Now there seems to be considerably more "Tarzanism" in Canada, at least in the fiction, than there was in 1943. Such a romantic view of man's relation to nature plays an important part in some recent Canadian fiction. In Atwood's Surfacing, for instance, the narrator's mad denial of everything connected with technology, reason, and civilization and her turning to nature for healing can be seen as an extreme example of this romantic viewpoint.

Until Canada was urbanized, most Canadian writers valued civilization and regarded the taming of nature as a desirable and praiseworthy activity. In contrast to the more recent romantic development of the idealization of the primitive that Frye calls "Tarzanism," John Seelye labels "Wild Pastoral," and I have chosen to call romantic or wilderness pastoral, there is the older form of "mild" pastoral, of "Virgil's pasteurized pasture" that I call classical or garden pastoral (John Seelye, "Some Green Thoughts on a Green Theme," in George Abbott White and Charles Newman, eds., Literature in Revolution [New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972], p. 584, p. 611). Nature in the romantic pastoral is primitive wilderness untouched by technology, whereas in the classical pastoral the natural landscape is tamed and arranged by man and his technology to form a garden (or perhaps farm) landscape midway between the city and the wilderness. The desire for such a "middle landscape" in life and in literature is probably the result of our ambivalence to both nature in its harsh, primitive state and to the sophisticated technology that we have developed for our use (and abuse). Such ambivalence gives rise to garden pastoral or pastoral of "the middle landscape." According to Leo Marx the desired goal in the United States

> was a society of the middle landscape, a rural nation exhibiting a happy balance of art and nature. But no one . . . had been able to identify the point of arrest, the critical moment when the tilt might be expected and progress cease to be progress. . . . [the pastoral idea became] an increasingly transparent and jejune expression of the national preference for having it both ways. (The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America [New York: Oxford University Press, 1967], p. 226)

Concerning our usual relation with nature, perhaps, like Atwood's Mrs. Moodie, all people are "divided down the middle" and preach "progress and the march of civilization while brooding elegiacally upon the destruction of the wilderness" (The Journals of Susanna Moodie [Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1970], p. 62). Leo Marx says that "ambiguity is the attribute of the physical universe that matches the contradiction at the heart of a culture that would deify the Nature it is engaged in plundering" (The Machine in the Garden, p. 301). Taking such ambivalence into account, most likely the ideal situation would consist of "just enough" technological development to enable us to live comfortably with nature, but each person has a different idea of what is "just enough" and, more important, it is only in retrospect that any of us can judge the moment when there was "just enough" and not too little or too much. Such a balance between wild nature and technology is the essence of classical or garden pastoralism. In Canadian literature such a balance seems to exist on Brian's uncle's farm in Who has Seen the Wind and on the Canaan farm in The Mountain and the Valley where we are given examples of personally-run and wisely-mechanized farms. Such farms are probably the Canadian equivalent of the British garden although in Kroetsch's The Words of my Roaring there is an actual garden. (An example where technology is not wisely used to create a garden on the prairies is Abe Spalding's farm in Fruits of the Earth.) Perhaps because of the harshness of the climate and certainly because of the particular time of settlement and development, this balance has hardly existed in Canada and, except for the examples mentioned, is difficult to find in our literature. Most of the literature that deals with man's relationship with the land is about the lack of balance, about the predominance first of wild nature and then of technology. We seem to have gone very quickly from one state to the other with no time in between. Thus, in the fiction of the last twenty years the predominance of technology over nature is a common theme.

Such imbalance between nature and technology has led to the desire for either a return to the time when such a balance did exist (and it is quite possible, however, that such a condition never did actually exist in any place at any time but only in imagination or in art) or the abandonment of such an ideal of balance and an opting for the wilderness pastoral as the ideal. A turning away from technology, complexity, and urban life toward a wilderness landscape can be judged as simple-minded escapism, as the giving up on urban life by the urban dweller. Raymond Williams even goes so far as to suggest that the desire to use nature as a retreat "is a form of that persistent desire to get away from what is seen as the world, or from what, more interestingly, is seen as other people" (p. 24). Such a complete and permanent withdrawal (or the desire for one) from people--whether to the wilderness or to a garden world--can be seen as neurotic or misanthropic. MacKay in The Wabeno Feast, the protagonists in But We are Exiles and Gone Indian, the narrator in Surfacing, and various characters in Arkwright exhibit such neurosis and misanthropy.

However, if such an escape into nature (even if only a dream which is seen to be preferable to the nightmare of an urban technological world) can be called "simple" pastoralism, there is a pastoralism that can be defined as "complex." The terms "simple" and "complex" are borrowed, although with some changes, from Leo Marx. He equates simple pastoralism with romantic or wilderness pastoralism and complex pastoralism with the classical or garden variety, and then goes on to point out what he sees as the difference between the two:

> Both seem to originate in a recoil from the pain and responsibility of life in a complex civilization . . . The difference is that the primitive hero keeps going . . . so that eventually he locates value as far as possible, in space or time or both, from organized society; the shepherd [the hero of the classical or garden pastoral], on the other hand, seeks a resolution of the conflict between the opposed worlds of nature and art. (The Machine in the Garden, p. 22)

I do not make precisely the same equation as Marx does because it seems possible to have simple (that is, escapist) pastoralism of both the garden variety (as in The Words of my Roaring) and the wilderness type (as in The Wabeno Feast). Also, complex (that is, reconciliatory) pastoralism can develop out of a wilderness experience (perhaps as at the end of Surfacing and in Douglas LePan's "Canoe-trip") or out of a garden world (as in Who has Seen the Wind).

Simple pastoralism locates the source of inspiration, vitality and goodness in nature as far from society as possible while complex pastoralism, although recognizing the value of nature, finds value in people and community and attempts to reconcile man and nature. Another important difference between these two types of pastoralism is the difference between the desire for permanent withdrawal from people and a temporary withdrawal for purposes of renewal. Such a temporary retreat from society can give one a perspective on it; and after the revelations that life in nature can provide, the person who has experienced these revelations goes back into the world he has left more able to face its problems. Take Surfacing for example: if there is a change in the narrator which involves a departure away from neurosis and misanthropy and an acceptance of the value of relationships between people, if there is a return to society after valuable experiences--valuable to spirit or psyche--in nature implied in the ending of that novel, it can be said to develop from simple pastoral into a complex one.

Escape (whether permanent or temporary) from the modern world which is generally characterized by new, complex technology and increasing urbanization can be into nature (whether wild or tame) as mentioned, or it can be into memory; and introducing memory brings another aspect of pastoralism into focus--an aspect that I earlier called the nostalgic mood, a mood that is essential to pastoralism. According to Northrop Frye pastoralism is "an idealization of memory, especially childhood memory" (The Bush Garden, p. 241):

> At the heart of all social mythology lies what may be called . . . a pastoral myth, the vision of a social ideal. The pastoral myth in its most common form is associated with childhood, or with some earlier social condition . . . that can be identified with childhood. The nostalgia for a world of peace and protection, with a spontaneous response to the nature around it, with a leisure and composure not to be found today, is particularly strong in Canada. (The Bush Garden, pp. 238-39)

It seems to be part of human nature to feel nostalgia for the past at one time or another even if that past was not particularly pleasant. The human mind has the ability to find some good in the past once it has gone; the known and finished past time is often preferred to the unknown future or to the unpleasant or dull present. The focusing on a landscape that existed in the past, whether a real and remembered past or one that has been read about or imagined, is a way of escaping from the present. The desire for stability in a world of change is connected with the idea of a lost happier and innocent past, usually associated with childhood. Such a retrospective vision is one way of coping with social, economic, and technological change (the opposite reaction is the futuristic or utopian vision), or as the narrator of Marian Engel's *The Honeyman Festival* says: "Homesick, am I? Everyone's homesick now. If you don't know how to make a new world, you fall back on the glow of the old one " ([Toronto: Anansi, 1970], p. 41). One of the sources of the word "nostalgia" is the Latin translation of *Heimweh*, the German word for "homesickness." The other source is *nostos*, the Greek word for "return." Thus, nostalgia is a return in imagination to the place and/or time for which one is homesick.

Such retrospective pastoralism (and "Tarzanism" is the only kind of pastoralism that is not retrospective) attempts to deny change, and that change can focus on place or on time. If the focus of the change from childhood past to adult present is place, then change of place from, say, a rural landscape to an urban landscape can result in nostalgia for the former. In fact, although pastoral literature is often about nature, it is actually life in urban centres, a life of sophistication and complexity, that seems to be more likely to give rise to the desire to write such literature. The pastoral writer who focuses on nature as his subject is most likely a person who has moved from the country to the city and remembers his past life in the country with nostalgia. Raymond Williams comments on the fusion of nature, the past, and childhood in retrospective pastoralism:

> A way of seeing has been connected with a lost phase of living, and the association of happiness with childhood has been developed into a whole convention, in which not only innocence and security but peace and plenty have been imprinted, indelibly, first on a particular period of the rural past, which is now connected with a lost identity, lost relations and lost certainties, in the memory of what is called, against present consciousness, Nature. (pp. 138-39)

But children inevitably grow up and time passes, and the inner sense of loss and change is projected onto a particular landscape.

Also possible, of course, is that the life-long city-dweller can have romantic notions about life in nature which he has gained through holidays in the country and through reading pastoral literature; such pastoralism is "not a rural but a suburban or dormitory dream" (Williams, p. 47). In this case his memories of a pastoral place are unrealistic or gained second hand. These romantic "memories" differ from those of a person who has lived and worked in the country but who has not romanticized that life and work. The difference in attitude is summed up by the narrator of Alice Munro's story "Home" when she says,

> I am not among those who will tell you that this labour in the sheep stable is restorative, that it has a peculiar dignity, not on your life. I was born to it and see it differently. Time and place can close in on me so fast, as they cannot do for holidayers in this life. (David Helwig and Joan Harcourt, eds., 74: New Canadian Stories [Ottawa: Oberon Press, 1974], p. 151)

Or as Homer says to Lou in Engel's Bear, "You're from Toronto, you'll love a log house " ([Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976], pp. 26-27). Apparently, anyone who had to live in a log house or to spend time shovelling manure in a sheep stable will have different (and probably more realistic) ideas about the rustic life than holidayers will. Homer and Munro's narrator are definitely not holidayers and are not purveyors of pastoral ideology. After all, if "the peasant is the city-dweller's dream," the peasant is not likely to idealize his own way of living--at least not until after it is gone or he has moved to town (The Honeyman Festival, p. 96).

If place in pastoral remains constant and the focus of the change from childhood past to adult present is time, then the change in time will usually be marked by a change in technology (that is, man-made devices), and nostalgia in this case will be for superseded technology. Although I have called this type of pastoralism "modern," according to Marshall McLuhan, superseded technology has been the subject of pastoral literature from the beginning:

> When machine production was new, it gradually created an environment whose content was the old environment of agrarian life and the arts and crafts. This older environment was elevated to an art form by the new mechanical environment. The machine turned Nature into an art form. . . . Each new technology creates an environment that is itself regarded as corrupt and degrading. Yet the new one turns its predecessor into an art form. (Understanding Media, p. ix)

Writing about the origins of the pastoral, W. W. Greg says, "Only when the shepherd-songs ceased to be the outcome of unalloyed pastoral conditions did they become distinctively pastoral" ("Pastoral: A Literary Inquiry," in Eleanor Terry Lincoln, ed., Pastoral and Romance: Modern Essays in Criticism [Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969], p. 9). Only once there was a change in time marked by a change in technology was there the comparison of past and present and nostalgia for the past. Thus, a mention of horses, radio, books, or canoes in Canadian literature often has a nostalgic context. For instance, in Drew's story "Wood" the crosscut saw is seen by the narrator as a more desirable technology than the power saw because of his association of the crosscut saw with his happy childhood. For Kroetsch the horse and the radio, which have been superseded by the tractor and the television set, are technologies that are associated with the past and evoke nostalgia. This type of pastoralism that focuses on a change in time is not confined either to rural or urban landscapes; it depends on the change in technology, not on the place or on the kind of technology that has been superseded. Nostalgia for the horse, for example, can be matched by the urban-dweller's nostalgia for the electric trolley which has been replaced by the gas bus. Such a nostalgia for superseded urban technologies serves as the basis for what I call "urban pastoralism"; and Mordecai Richler's writing provides some good examples of pastoralism in an urban setting. Such pastoralism is "modern" in the sense that the technological horizon is much more clearly identifiable in pastoral literature of the present than that written in the past.

Of course, changes in place and time can be combined, and nostalgia can exist for both landscape and technology at once. Also, changes in place and time and a remembrance of things past are not inevitably coloured by nostalgia. For example, A Winnipeg Childhood, the fictionalized account of Dorothy Livesay's early childhood, is not nostalgic even though it is about childhood; the rural and urban landscapes serve merely as background, and any mention of technological change is incidental. However, Jane, the narrator of Elizabeth Brewster's The Sisters, exhibits nostalgia for a particular rural landscape in New Brunswick (although not for any outmoded technology) where, poor but happy, she lived for several years in her childhood. In Lives of Girls and Women and in some of her stories, Alice Munro deals with the tendency to romanticize childhood and past technologies; but her narrators, even while recounting events and describing the landscapes of their youth, are not nostalgic. On the other hand, in Margaret Atwood's Surfacing, the narrator's memories of childhood are firmly attached to a particular wilderness landscape and to outmoded technology, and they are extremely nostalgic. Clearly, the mood evoked by a literary account of childhood or of the past varies, but the presence or lack of nostalgia for the landscape of childhood and/or superseded technologies are certainly an important aspect of the personality and values of a character in fiction.

When a writer compares past and present, one of three modes of comparison can be chosen: the pastoral, the satirical, or the ironic. Since two sets of moral values are contrasted and one is claimed to be superior, pastoralism itself moves in the direction of satire. The usual pattern is that the natural and simple and rural landscape which is identified with childhood and/or outmoded technology is presented as being better than the artificial and complex and urban landscape which is identified with new technology and/or life as an adult. Pastoralism can involve social criticism, although perhaps from a conservative viewpoint, so the writer of pastoral can be a social critic as Drew is when he contrasts the Indian technology of the past with ours and makes it clear that we are to favour the former; and the writer of satire can include pastoralism as Simpson does when he engages in an attack against new technology and its attendant values. In some cases the borderline between pastoral and satire is invisible and the two merge as in Simpson's The Peacock Papers. Although they are different modes of literature, pastoral and satire can have a similar motive and a similar effect.

Irony can be an element of pastoralism. If, for instance, pastoralism is taken as "complex" rather than "simple" and "the ideal is inseparably yoked to its opposite," then irony is an inherent feature of pastoralism (The Machine in the Garden, p. 318). One example: the relationship between city and country in complex pastoral literature is ambiguous because nature is both good and bad and so is urban civilization both good and bad; thus, such a contrast between city and country could be ironic. However, in spite of Leo Marx's linking of irony to pastoralism--a connection that is useful since too many people see only the simple and sentimental in pastoralism--it seems to me that the link can be rather tenuous at times. If no choices are made and no sides taken, if one set of values is not presented as being better than another, a work becomes mainly ironic and only peripherally connected to the pastoral mode. If Beautiful Losers, for instance, finally favours neither natural man nor technological man, neither superseded technology nor new technology, neither the past nor the present--if Cohen recognizes the incongruities involved in pastoralism, the tension between the ideal and its opposite, accepts them and attempts a synthesis--then the novel is ironic and is important in a study of pastoralism because, in treating some features of pastoral ironically, it departs from the usual pastoral pattern.

The conservative stance that seems to be inherent in pastoralism is one matter that various critics have tackled. People are often reluctant to face up to the awareness that results from new technology and are prone to desire escape into the past; according to McLuhan,

> as we begin to react in depth to the social life and problems of our global village, we become reactionaries. Involvement that goes with our instant technologies transforms the most "socially conscious" people into conservatives. (Understanding Media, p. 46)

Pastoralism can be seen as reactionary because it accepts and even idealizes the social and economic relations between people as they are thought to have been. What is often celebrated is something that was non-existent or else was bad for most people. "The recurrent myth of a happier and more natural past" is just that, a myth, and can be used to keep people down, claims Raymond Williams in The Country and the City (p. 40). But pastoralism in the sense of "retrospective radicalism" can exist" (p. 35). Past values can be used as a positive criticism of our own present ones even if one recognizes that the past was no Golden Age and the people not especially virtuous.

According to Leo Marx in The Machine in the Garden pastoralism can imply an ultimately static view of history and "a kind of conservative quietism," and it can result in a turning away from "the hard social and technological realities" (p. 129, p. 5). However, in a later essay he examines the possibility of reconciling the seemingly irreconcilable: pastoralism and revolution. He admits that "the concern of pastoralism . . . has been to change the individual consciousness, not the structure of society. It has been an aesthetic ethos for the privileged, not a political program for the masses" ("Susan Sontag's 'New Left' pastoral: notes on revolutionary pastoralism in America," in George Abbott White and Charles Newman, eds., Literature in Revolution [New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972], p. 553). Pastoralism implies a withdrawal to a simpler, happier environment usually in nature, and for most people there has never been any place to go. Also, although nature is the appropriate place for the contemplative life, can it be the place to start a revolution? Marx takes into account the opinions of critics such as William Empson that pastoralism is a way of reinforcing illusions of class harmony but goes on to claim that the apparent contradiction of the term "revolutionary pastoralism" can be reconciled. In his remarks about Susan Sontag's Trip to Hanoi, his example of revolutionary pastoralism, he emphasizes the "pastoral return" and claims that "the retreat [to a simpler life] is an escape, to be sure, but it is also a quest" (p. 563). The pastoral convention does allow for "moral seriousness":

> What makes today's pastoralism different . . . is the degree to which it is informed by a heightened political awareness. In the present state of American society, the old-fashioned return, with its emphasis upon private accommodation and aesthetic consolation, no longer seems adequate or even possible. . . .
>
> The contribution of the new pastoralists to revolutionary politics . . . is for the time being chiefly exemplary. . . . If such a program is compatible with revolutionary ideology, it is because, first, it prefigures the transformation of the dominant culture and, second, because it provides a model for the transformation of human nature--of man himself--which has always been the ultimate concern of both pastoralism and left radicalism. (p. 575)

John Seelye, on the other hand, maintains that "no revolution ever started in the woods " (p. 637). He identifies "Wild Pastoral" as the source of American radicalism since "mild" pastoral is "decidedly establishmentarian" (p. 584, p. 580):

> "I've got mine" is very deep in the pastoral consciousness of America: Tityrus is with us always, for the Middle Landscape is nothing if not Middle Class, the Spiritual Landscape its counterpart, a sort of licensed grove, academic or otherwise. (p. 582)

He says that revolutionary pastoralism is "salvational, mystical, transcendental . . . evangelical . . . [and] evolutionary", credits (or blames) Thoreau for providing the impetus for such pastoralism in the United States, and points out the fallacy inherent in such a mystical system (p. 585):

> Primitivism, as an absolute ideology, posits the Wild as a source of the Good, and like all absolute ideologies, implies that the source is continuous, that that [mistake in the text] the Good increases in direct proportion to Wildness. (p. 635)

Thoreau saw the fragility and benevolence in nature but not the terror. Also, according to Seelye, it is probably true that "the idealization of rural values" which is part of pastoralism can be used as effectively by the right as by the left in politics (p. 635).

It seems, then, that the last word has not been written on the politics of pastoralism or on the features that one can expect in pastoral literature.

[4] Since "the constant element in pastoral is psychological rather than formal," I have chosen to deal with the psychological rather than with the formal in this study of technology and pastoralism in Canadian literature (The Machine in the Garden, p. 91). I suspect, in any case, that the formal aspects of pastoral play a small part in the work of

contemporary Canadian writers with, perhaps, the exception of James Reaney's A Suit of Nettles. In this kind of study, pastoralism is regarded as an ideology, a view of life. The psychological element of pastoral consists of values and ideas as presented through images and descriptions of technology and nature that each author chooses. By taking this approach to the fiction of Wayland Drew, Robert Kroetsch, Margaret Atwood, Leo Simpson, Mordecai Richler, Leonard Cohen, and Alice Munro, and by concerning myself with the relationship between technology and nature and especially with the connection between superseded technology and pastoralism in their work, I am not giving a full analysis of the writing of each author--rather I am presenting a detailed examination of one important aspect of the writing of these authors.

Drew, Kroetsch and, to some extent, Atwood, attempt to persuade the reader to side with vulnerable nature and the natural man against destructive Western technology and the technological man. Tending toward a conservative viewpoint, Simpson examines the conflict between old and new technologies and the values that adhere to each. Richler points the direction to the future of pastoral in focusing on superseded technologies in an urban setting. For Cohen, the ironic writer, all possibilities coexist on an equal footing, and synthesis rather than a choice between technology and nature (or System and Magic) is the goal. Munro, too, willingly takes whatever is at hand to create her art. Generally she subtly condemns pastoral ideology and yet sympathetically explains its universal and lasting appeal.

The sentimental pastoral of the eighteenth century may have been "easy, vulgar, and therefore disgusting," as Dr. Johnson said. But the modern pastoral with its emphasis on the psychological and its revealing use of the technological is too important and too interesting to be so easily dismissed.

Chapter I

[1] Wayland Drew, "Wilderness and limitation," Canadian Forum, 52 (February 1973), 18.

For convenience, a quotation from a primary source--after the first reference--will be indicated by a page number in parentheses placed after the sentence in which it occurs.

[2] Wayland Drew, The Wabeno Feast (Toronto: Anansi, 1973), p. 18.

[3] There are several other interesting examples in Canadian literature where a "sense of time" is important. In Brébeuf and His Brethren (part III) the Indians are extremely impressed with the "black signs" on paper by which the white men communicate over distance; and the clock is even more of a "miracle" to them because it seems to govern the rising and setting of the sun and tells the white men when to eat, when to pray, and when to sleep (E. J. Pratt, Selected Poems of E. J. Pratt, edited by Peter Buitenhuis [Toronto: Macmillan, 1968], p. 106). Both writing and clock time are vital to western civilization, and in Pratt's poem both are linked to the white man's emphasis on rationality. In Ostenso's romantic novel Wild Geese, where the instinctual is the good, Caleb Gare, who has an obsession with the material aspects of his land, is the villain. His tyranny over his family can be summed up in the comparison that the author makes between him and the clock: "Caleb was the clock by which the family slept, woke, ate and moved" ([Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1961], p. 56). In Grove's Fruits of the Earth, Abe Spalding's identity as technological man is shown by his obsession with time. He carries a pocket watch, and early in the novel we are told that he has the habit of timing his trips to and from town to see if he can cut seconds off the time required to make the trip ([Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1965], p. 29). After all, to a man like Abe, time is money, and money is the measure of success and worth.

[4] William Dawe's journal in Kroetsch's Badlands is judged in a similarly negative way. Fifty-six years after his expedition into the Badlands of Alberta, his daughter attempts to retrace his steps. Anna Dawe's companion, Anna Yellowbird, flings into the river the pictures of the expedition that she has kept for fifty-six years, and Anna Dawe throws in her father's last field book which has been like a curse to her. Like MacKay's journal, Dawe's journal, too, served to conceal the truth: "Shutting out instead of letting in. Concealing" (Badlands, [Toronto: new press, 1975], p. 269). The past seems to be important in Kroetsch's novels, and yet ironically the most positive characters turn their backs on it. The last sentence, with the two Annas walking away from the source of the river, where they have thrown in their relics of the past, is "We walked all the way out. And we did not once look back, not once, ever" (p. 270). Presumably they are freed to live in the present, like the Indian woman in The Wabeno Feast, and don't need pictures and journals any longer.

[5] Wayland Drew, "Wood,"in David Helwig and Joan Harcourt, eds., 74: New Canadian Stories (Ottawa: Oberon Press, 1974), p. 77.

Chapter II

[1] Robert Kroetsch, The Words of my Roaring (Toronto: Macmillan, 1966), p. 94.

In an interview with Russell Brown, Kroetsch said, "I often think of modern writing as being involved in a kind of dialectic--two forces playing off against each other" (University of Windsor Review 7:2 [Spring 1972], 14). In another interview, this one with Donald Cameron, Kroetsch said, "We see opposites in necessary balance all the time . . . We become fascinated with problems of equilibrium. Americans are interested in expansion" ("Robert Kroetsch: The American and the Canadian Voice in Conversations with Canadian Novelists [Toronto: Macmillan, 1973], p. 85).

[2] Robert Kroetsch, But We are Exiles (Toronto: Macmillan, 1965), p. 2.

[3] Morton Ross says that But We are Exiles ends with an

> open question of how Guy's final action is to be understood. Is it a final reconciliation between two disparate attitudes toward experience, an acknowledgement by Guy of his essential identity with Hornyak? Or is it a violent usurpation, a repudiation or exorcism of Hornyak's memory and all that it represents? It is impossible to be certain. ("Robert Kroetsch and his Novels," in Donald G. Stephens, ed., Writers of the Prairies [Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1973] p. 107)

Just as it is impossible to know whether Peter Guy lives or dies, it is impossible to know what his motives are for taking Michael's place in the canoe.

[4] Robert Kroetsch, The Studhorse Man (London: Macdonald, 1969), p. 70.

[5] Kroetsch's fifth novel, Badlands, seems to be largely about history and its relation to personal myth-making. Dawe, a madman like Demeter or Madham, has a "maniacal obsession" to recover the past (p. 8). Web claims that "there is no such thing as a past," but for Dawe, the collector of dinosaur bones, "there is nothing else," and he devotes his life to looking for the past, and to excavating and preserving it (p. 4). He is a man who believes in "absolutes" and in "fact and reason" and whose field notes show "an extravagance of reason" (p. 110, p. 35, p. 212). As his daughter says, Dawe "would accept and endure destiny . . . It was chance he could not abide " (p. 109).

[6] G. S. McCaughy says that Hazard, the "doer," is destroyed by Demeter's confused attempt to take up Hazard's role, to usurp his character, which Demeter can only really do as vicarious biographer. After his one attempt at action, Demeter retreats "into madness and the passivity

of the spectator world that has become the Canada of today." Twenty years after Hazard's death Demeter finally writes his "biography." This "permanent adolescent" lives a life of "bitter misanthropy, a misanthropy that has pushed us away from any possible entrance into the life of the doers, and keeps us chained before the never, never land of the Grey Cup football games, pornographic movies, and yes, even the sterility of the scholar's life" ("The Studhorse Man: A Madman's View of Canadian History," Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa, 44 [July-September 1974], 411, 413).

[7] It is impossible to know what motivates Hazard in the action that follows; all we can see in the novel are the consequences of isolated actions of various characters. Konrad Gross understands the importance of the horse in this novel and the decision that Hazard is faced with regarding Marie Eshpeter's use of Poseidon:

> The colt symbolizes Indian territory and nature in general. Hazard saves both the colt and the red man, but the Cree's reaction reveals the different concepts of property of the white and Indian cultures. The Indian does not consider the land as his personal belonging, but as a means of providing for his physical needs. The white man regards territory as private property, which excludes its use by anybody else but its owner. The Cree leaves the colt to his life-saver, who feels like an intruder, but accepts it as his own and tries to turn it into material success. . . . This is a key episode in the novel, for Kroetsch contrasts Indian values with those upon which white Canadian present-day life is based. Hazard's journey does not end with his departure from the past, but leads him finally into modern society perverted by the lack of the anti-materialistic outlook which is characteristic of the Indian way of life. . . . When Hazard becomes the chance witness of the extraction of seed [at the Eshpeter ranch], he is faced with the alternative of following his obsession [finding the perfect mare for Poseidon] or surrendering to the temptations of the modern age. ("Looking Back in Anger? Frederick Niven, W. O. Mitchell, and Robert Kroetsch on the History of the Canadian West," Journal of Canadian Fiction, 3:2 [1974], 53)

We see the alternatives that Hazard must choose between, but we never know what choice he makes.

[8] The sense of the loss of a better time and place is part of pastoral ideology. Madham cannot go back to the place of his youth so he sends Jeremy, who is like a son (or a young alter ego) sent to reclaim a father's youth. Jeremy gives Madham archetypal dimensions when he describes his professor as "the old mad Adam of the original day. The first night, outside the garden. . . . even then, that first time, trying to recapture everything that was gone" (Gone Indian [Toronto: new press, 1973], pp. 91-92). If Madham cannot recapture the past,

maybe Jeremy can.

This sense of loss is associated, of course, with childhood and youth. In Gone Indian there is one instance of youth being recaptured. Roger Dorck has suffered amnesia from a snowmobile accident, and when he wakes up from unconsciousness, twenty years have been wiped out. He thinks Jill is the young Bea and that Robert, her husband, is alive. Madham suggests the possibility that Roger will remain eighteen forever, and he writes to Jill: "I imagine for both of you a kind of tranquility [tranquillity] in that lasting return to a golden youth " (p. 156). To return to a golden youth is probably what Madham (and many other people who share his type of pastoral ideal) would like, but to remain forever with the mind and memories of an eighteen year-old while the body continues to age and the world to change puts one element of the pastoral impulse in grotesque perspective.

[9] Russell M. Brown, "An Interview with Robert Kroetsch," p. 7.

[10] In the interview with Donald Cameron, Kroetsch explains the fascination some Americans have with Canada:

> All over the world people are moving from the country into the city. But the American Dream goes the other way. . . . The American view of Canada has changed so radically, remoulding Canada as part of, as a corrective to, the falling dream. Young Americans are seeing in Canada right now . . . the sense of space, the sense of freedom, the sense of authentic experience. (p. 83)

In a talk delivered to a group of Canadian teachers, Kroetsch discussed the importance of the North to the Canadian psyche and the ambivalence that the people have toward this large expanse of wilderness:

> The world of technocracy is especially a world of noise: sophisticated noise, exciting noise, destructive noise. . . . I find in the Canadian writers whom I know personally a peculiar will towards silence. Something that on the surface looks like a will towards failure.
>
> This silence--this impulse towards the natural, the uncreated, if you will--is summed up by the north. The north is not a typical American frontier, a natural world to be conquered and exploited. Rather, in spite of inroads, it remains a true wilderness, a continuing presence. We don't want to conquer it. Sometimes we want it to conquer us. And we don't have to go there literally in order to draw sustenance from it, any more than the American had to go literally to the west. It presses southward into the Canadian consciousness. ("The Canadian Writer and the American Literary Tradition," English Quarterly, 4:2 [1971], 46)

Then, like the romantic he is, Kroetsch goes on to conclude that the survival of Canadians could depend on their reluctance to leave the wilderness and face modern technology:

> Yes. That's the problem. We [Canadians] live with the exquisite fear that we are invisible men.
>
> And yet we are reluctant to venture out of the

> silence and into the noise; out of the snow; into the technocracy.
>
> For in our very invisibility lies our chance for survival. (p. 49)

[11] There is a direct connection between technology and pastoralism in several places in the novel. Once Dorck revives in hospital, Jeremy takes off on a Sleipnir snowmobile in search of Bea. Nostalgic for past technology, Jeremy thinks of it as a horse, although it more likely has eight horsepower than eight feet: "Like a cowboy, lost, I would let my horse take me home" (p. 144). Also, for the occasion of the Notikeewin winter festival a team of horses pulls a hayrack although this is not the community's usual means of conveyance. At the festival one of the races is with dogs and sleds; thus, the technology of the Eskimos needed for survival is turned into a game. The same applies to other activities that used to be work; wood-splitting, ice-cutting, flour-packing, and log-sawing used to be essential work and now are turned into contests to amuse spectators.

[12] Madham is a man of the technological world. For instance, the sound of automobiles is like a natural sound to him: "Throbbing on the air came a dull and distant roar of automobiles that might have been silence itself. Or the rolling of thunder " (p. 2).

[13] The phrase "the shadow of his imagined self" might suggest that Roger Dorck is Jeremy's shadow, the embodiment of Jeremy's sexual, vital self--lying down, cold, like a corpse--until awakened by the experiences Jeremy has been through in the Northwest. On another occasion Madham says of Jeremy: "He felt an urgent need to find his lost, his abandoned, suitcase. . . . I suspect he had recognized his own shadow: he wanted, once more, to run " (p. 125). And after Jeremy crazily harangues Dorck in the hospital, he revives and Jeremy runs out "as if he had met his own soul on the high road to hell " (p. 143).

[14] During the snowshoe race Jeremy sees the water and ice of the river as an image of freedom and the man-made railway bridge above the river as a barrier to that freedom: "I saw the black threads of water themselves seemingly caught in grotesquely broken and sculptured chunks and slabs of ice: great blocks of ice that had been caught by the timbers that were the pillars of the bridge " (p. 85).

[15] Frank Davey, "Robert Kroetsch,"in his From There to Here: A Guide to English-Canadian Literature Since 1960 (Erin, Ontario: Press Porcepic, 1974), p. 158.

Chapter III

[1] Robert Kroetsch, "The Canadian Writer and the American Literary Tradition," p. 47.

[2] The imagery Atwood uses in her short story "Polarities" serves to divide characters in the same way. Louise, in her oversize fur coat, is compared to a gopher; and at one point, Morrison, the narrator, finds her asleep and lays "the bread gently beside her as if leaving crumbs on a stump for unseen animals" (Tamarack Review, 58 [1971], 13). Louise hates technology (the phone and car, in this case) and is judged to be mad; her madness consists of taking "as real what the rest of us pretend is only metaphorical" (p. 20). She judges herself, however, as a complete person and Morrison as the incomplete one. Of herself she says, "I'm all-inclusive" and "I *am* the circle. I have the poles within myself. What I have to do is keep myself in one piece, it *depends* on me" (p. 7, p. 21). About him she writes: "He needs to be completed, he refuses to admit his body is part of his mind. He can be in the circle possibly, but only if he will surrender his role as a fragment and show himself willing to merge with the greater whole (p. 20). Another example where man is described as a creature of technology and woman as a creature of nature occurs when Morrison concludes that he loves Louise and fantasizes about her:

> At night she would be there in the sub-zero bedroom for him to sink into as into a swamp, warm and obliterating. . . .
>
> So this was his dream girl then . . . a defeated formless creature on which he could inflict himself like shovel on earth, axe on forest, use without being used, know without being known. (p. 23)

[3] In the novel Marian's surname is spelled two ways: MacAlpin (p. 20) and McAlpin (p. 126). Margaret Atwood, *The Edible Woman* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973).

[4] There is one example, however, of technology that is not meant to work. Marian's and Ainsley's landlady uses the technology of the past as chic interior decoration. Keeping company with the pictures of ancestors, a regimental flag, and a line of brass warming-pans decorating the stairway wall is a dangerous "many-pronged spinning wheel" on the landing (p. 12).

[5] What Gloria Onley writes about the eating of the cake-woman gives support to my interpretation of that symbolic action:

> Making a surrogate self out of cake and then eating it in a comic parody of ritual cannibalism, she both destroys a false image and reabsorbs her culturally split-off female self. . . . [She eliminates] what she is *not* . . .
>
> Marian's fiancé refuses to eat her cake body; unable to liberate himself from consumerhood by comic communion, he rejects even the possibility of self-knowledge. . . . [His is] the world of technological hedonism founded on

> industrial technology. . . . It is in reaction to this world of surfaces that Marian slowly becomes unable to eat anything at all. ("Power Politics in Bluebeard's Castle," Canadian Literature, 60 [Spring 1974], 25)

[6] In the unpaginated introduction to the New Canadian Library edition of The Edible Woman, Alan Dawe calls the ending "ambiguous but somehow triumphant." To me it seems more ambiguous than triumphant, and Atwood herself has called the novel an "anti-comedy." (Graeme Gibson, "Interview with Margaret Atwood,"in Eleven Canadian Novelists [Toronto: Anansi, 1973], p. 20). The ending could only be seen as triumphant if Duncan is seen as an improvement over Peter as Dawe seems to: "Can it be that Duncan is really offered as a serious alternative to Peter? Margaret Atwood does not answer this question with an outright yes, but she does imply that Duncan's egotism is preferable to Peter's because it, at least, makes no demands." But Duncan does make demands on Marian of an insidious kind, and if the imagery that is used to describe him is carefully examined, it is not possible to see him as a serious alternative. Marian might indeed prefer his type of egotism, but that doesn't mean that Atwood intends us to prefer it.

Dawe admits that Marian's "decision to escape to Duncan leads not so much to a traditional happy ending, as to the beginning of what will undoubtedly be a new and potentially more interesting set of problems." Yes, the problems with Duncan might be more interesting, but if Marian does not see Duncan as a problem, and it's not clear that she does, her identity is in as much danger as it was at the hands of Peter. George Woodcock is right in seeing the novel as one about "emotional cannibalism" and right in seeing Peter as an emotional cannibal, and Duncan "if not exactly a cannibal, is a more insidious kind of parasite, a lamprey perhaps, battening on her compassion to feed his monstrous self-pity" ("The Symbolic Cannibals," Canadian Literature, 42 [Autumn 1969], 99). In eating the cake-woman Marian has consumed the artificial "normal" being she attempted to become, Woodcock says, but he doesn't explain why Duncan eats the cake too. Perhaps it is Atwood's way of telling us that Marian's "cure" is incomplete, and that because she cannot see this she could lapse into a state of victimization again. Frank Davey, too, sees more confusion than illumination in the cake-eating scene ("Atwood Walking Backwards," Open Letter [second series], 5 [Summer 1973], 79).

[7] Margaret Atwood, Surfacing (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972), p. 51.

[8] The journey into the wilderness is for the narrator a journey into the heart of darkness. According to Rosemary Sullivan "the experience of returning to the wilderness is an experience of penetration to a previously unknown or repressed self, the unconscious" ("Surfacing and Deliverance," Canadian Literature, 67 [Winter 1976], 11). Here "Nature becomes a forum . . . [for] moral self-scrutiny" (p. 12).

[9] The father's camera can be seen as an alien instrument used to record and explain the Indian rock paintings and, thus, perhaps is used

against the wilderness gods. Ironically, the father dies by accident, and accident is something he has probably done all he could to eliminate from his life. Equally ironic is that the mother's death which involved so much pain and suffering was the "natural" death.

[10] The connection between reason and the mechanical world is suggested in "the City Planners" in The Circle Game: "the rational whine of a power mower/ cutting a straight swath in the discouraged grass" ([Toronto: Anansi, 1966], pp. 27-28). However, the "sane" world of the planned suburbs is no match for the "bland madness of snows."

[11] Perhaps the poem "The Surveyors" in The Animals in that Country served as the genesis for Surfacing. Atwood describes how "the surveyors,/ clearing/ their trail of single reason," impose their straight lines on "a land where geometries are multiple" ([Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1968], p. 4). The "trail of single reason" might mean profit for the logging company, or whoever would benefit from their surveying, but it also brings to mind the single-minded reliance on reason that technology has. In the poem the surveyors' painted numbers gradually fade and come to look like Indian rock paintings: "red vestiges of an erased/ people." In the novel it is the rationalist surveyor (the narrator's father) who changes with the effect of time and nature upon him: "changed/ by the gradual pressures of endless/ green on the eyes, the diffused/ weight of summer" until he comes to see the value in Indian rock paintings which have nothing to do with reason or usefulness.

[12] The same indictment against city people invading the country is made in Atwood's poem "The End of the World: Weekend, Near Toronto" in Procedures for Underground where she says:

> The cars are lined up, edging slowly
> on the north lanes, the windshields
> glitter, it is the city moving,
> the drivers intent on getting out, getting
> away from something
> they carry always with them.
> ([Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1970], p. 32)

[13] According to Rosemary Sullivan, Atwood believes in a kind of mystical relation between people and nature, a state of being that the narrator has achieved at the end:

> Atwood sees beneath the predatory cycle of nature another, sacrificial cycle . . . We must move beyond the victor-victim relationships, which are simplistic categories, to a new vision which recognizes that if nature is a sacrificial cycle of life dying to sustain life, then man's position in it is not hunter but suppliant and the energy he absorbs from nature is not that of power but of awe, the capacity to worship. ("Surfacing and Deliverance," p. 13)

A view of nature that includes opposites is as difficult for the narrator of Surfacing to accept as it is for Johnnie Backstrom. The negative side of life and nature is something she doesn't want to see, but the vision of the fish "implies that nature is neither hostile nor benevolent; it exists in itself, a living process which includes opposites--a process of life as energy" (p. 15).

[14] Catherine McLay sees a message in this drawing that is "essentially feminine" ("The Divided Self: Theme and Pattern in Margaret Atwood's Surfacing," Journal of Canadian Fiction, 4:1 [1975], 93). The father had not recognized the importance of the non-rational in human life, and his legacy shows that he finally saw his failure. The preservation of this drawing of a baby in the womb might very well indicate that the mother recognized that she, too, had failed her daughter. Perhaps she finally saw that she had allowed her daughter to grow up to be an irresponsible adult who still wants to exist totally protected from harm and with the level of awareness and responsibility for self of an unborn baby. If this is the message the mother wanted to convey to her daughter, it is essentially a human one rather than a feminine one.

[15] Atwood's use of mad narrators in her first two novels has caused some misunderstanding. Frank Davey claims that Atwood

> wants every visible circumstance of their [Marian's and the narrator's] world to testify, at least remotely, to the dangers of disembodied rationalism and human exploitation. . . . the contemporary human mind has alienated itself from the natural wisdom of its body. ("Atwood Walking Backwards," p. 77)

This makes both novels thesis-novels, at least in part, with details selected to make a case. All authors select the words, actions, and perceptions of their characters, but Davey complains about Atwood's selectivity:

> the novels in no way judge or circumscribe the perceptual abilities of their narrators, but instead present their points of view as absolute and trustworthy. The narrators . . . do not give any information which would qualify or contradict their worldviews. There is no sense of irony or detachment; the author's views and the narrator's appear totally coincident. (pp. 77-78)

But the very fact of using madness as a narrative device serves to detach the author and reader, who are not mad, from the narrators, who are. Obviously sane perception can emerge from madness, but the reader is free to judge the sanity or insanity and the rightness or wrongness of any word or action, or even the whole worldview of each narrator. The reader is free to condemn them for being narrow and obsessive or for seeming to be trustworthy and absolute; but that is no reason to conclude that Atwood herself is totally coincident with her characters.

[16] The narrator must have had a twin, Anna thinks, because some of the lines on her palm are double (p. 88). She identifies this twin, Siamese twin in fact, as the fetus she aborted (p. 48); but it is possible that the twin is her Shadow or dark, irrational self that she must dive for and retrieve from the depths of the lake. Before she jumps in, she sees her shadow in the water and says, "My other shape was in the water" (p. 141). When she surfaces, she notices that feeling is beginning to

seep in; she has found something that was lacking in her. Atwood has said that Surfacing is a ghost story of the Henry James type "in which the ghost that one sees is in fact a fragment of one's own self which has split off" (Gibson, p. 29). When the narrator dives and surfaces, it is to find that fragment of herself.

[17] Whereas I take the narrator's animal-like union with Joe to be a negation of human individuality and an act of irresponsibility, Robert Kroetsch says that it might lead to the narrator giving "birth to her true identity," giving "birth to herself" ("Unhiding the Hidden: Recent Canadian Fiction," Journal of Canadian Fiction, 3:3 [1974], 44). The narrator's redemption (or the gaining of her true identity), it seems to me, can only happen through an awareness of responsibility for her own life and actions, not through "expiation, exorcism, and fertilization" as Phyllis Grosskurth claims ("Victimization or Survival," Canadian Literature, 55 [Winter 1973], 110). Catherine McLay goes along with Grosskurth's statement. She assumes that conception does occur and will result in another of those ubiquitous Can. Lit. babies. She says, "The begetting of the child is an expiation for the life she has allowed to be sacrificed " (p. 93). She never considers the possibility that there may have been no conception, or that if there is one, it can be seen in negative terms. McLay continues:

> Ultimately, the child heals the division in the mother between the self and the world, mind and body. But at this point it engenders a deeper separation. . . . She turns to the animal world, the world of nature, and she embraces its gods. (p. 93)

Assuming that the child, if there will be one born, will heal the division takes us beyond the end of the novel; it is not, by any means, a certainty that it would have such an effect. Obviously the critics who see the attempt at begetting another child as expiation will never agree with anyone who sees such an act as an irresponsible one.

[18] Rosemary Sullivan also sees this novel as an examination of the relation between power and goodness. The narrator "discovers that victimization has been an excuse to escape responsibility for evil" ("Surfacing and Deliverance," p. 10). This she has been able to do because she has divided the world into killer and victim. Atwood wants the narrator to recognize that evil, as well as goodness, is in everyone. Until the narrator can admit "I am the cause" (the words are from "It is dangerous to read newspapers" in The Animals in that Country), she will never find her authentic self and will continue being a victim. This is the way Atwood sees her character:

> It depends on whether or not you define yourself as intrinsically innocent, and if you define yourself as intrinsically innocent, then you have a lot of problems, because in fact you aren't. And the thing with her is she wishes not to be human. She wishes to be not human, because being human inevitably involves being guilty, and if you define yourself as innocent, you can't accept that. . . . If you define yourself as innocent then nothing is ever your fault--it is always somebody else doing it to you, and until you stop defining yourself as a victim that will always be true. (Gibson, p. 22)

Thus, identity is something largely self-given and not imposed--unless one chooses to have it imposed. In both novels "to a large extent the characters are creating the world which they inhabit," and if in a world that contains evil "you define yourself always as a harmless victim, there's nothing you can ever do about it. You can simply suffer" (p. 23, pp. 23-24). "If you are defining yourself as innocent, you refuse to accept power. You refuse to admit that you have it, then you refuse to exercise it, because the exercise of power is defined as evil" (p. 24). The narrator has assumed that to be defined as human one must be perfectly good, a goal that is out of reach. On the other hand, "if you define human beings as necessarily flawed, then anybody can be one" (p. 26).

[19] Frank Davey thinks that "such a confused and paranoid character as Atwood's narrator" would not gain all the insights that she has at the end: "The conclusion which is organic to the novel is the narrator's suicide--not her sudden and decisive attainment of illumination" ("Atwood Walking Backwards," p. 80). Perhaps the ending of the novel is rather unbelievable; perhaps Atwood's message that a victim can gain illumination and stop being a victim overrides all other considerations. The attainment of illumination is only a first, although very important, step (and an essential element of complex pastoralism); what happens after that Atwood does not tell us in the novel.

[20] I do not see the conclusion as conclusive in the way that Catherine McLay does. She says that the narrator answers Joe at the end and returns to the city with him: "Her final return to society, then, is an affirmation of her need to be human and to live with other human beings in an imperfect world" (p. 82). This might be what we wish the narrator to do; this is definitely a choice that is open to her, but we do not _know_ what her decision will be.

[21] _Bear_, by Marian Engel, _seems_ to be the perfect example of a modern pastoral idyll, and the ending seems to be much more clear-cut and decisive than the end of _Surfacing_. Lou, the heroine, leaves a dull job and loveless sex with her boss in the city and goes to northern Ontario for the summer in search of a new identity. After experiencing love for a bear, she returns "clean and simple and proud," reborn or revitalized and ready to start a new life in the city (p. 137). On a symbolic level the bear can be seen as the embodiment of Lou's repressed passion, her atrophied instinctual life, the world of nature from which she has cut herself off. After all, "passion is not the medium of bibliography," and Lou is a bibliographer (p. 70). Like the narrator of _Surfacing_, she must gain contact with this world of passion and with this part of herself if she is to survive.

Lou is an archivist with the Historical Institute, and her life consists of maps and manuscripts; they seem to define her identity, to be "her licence to exist," and she has cut everything else out of her life (p. 85). She "lived like a mole, buried deep in her office . . . She did not like cold air on her skin" (p. 11). Her chosen environment protects her from the unknown within herself and from the unknown outside: "Her basement room at the Institute was close to the steam pipes and protectively lined with books, wooden filing cabinets and very old, brown, framed photographs" (p. 11). She "loved old shabby things, things that had already been loved and suffered, objects with a past" (p. 12). Although it is a life that she has chosen, it sometimes seems grudging and grey to her, "an absence" rather than a real life (p. 19). Five years at the same job has had a bad effect on her:

> When, very occasionally, she raised her eyes from the past and surveyed the present, it faded from her view and became as ungraspable as a mirage. . . . she was . . . not satisfied that this was how the only life she had been offered should be lived. (pp. 19-20)

"The image of the Good Life long ago stamped on her soul was quite different from this, and she suffered in contrast" (p. 12). Somewhere along the way she had given up this image of the Good Life and settled for a dull, plodding one. "This year, however, she was due to escape the shaming moment of realization. The mole would not be forced to admit that it had been intended for an antelope" (p. 12). If Lou "had been intended for an antelope" rather than for the mole she appears to be, why, then, doesn't she live up to her secret identity as an antelope? Engel never explains what has made Lou what she is; we can only assume that it was a combination of personal choice and social pressure.

The chance to escape from the city gives Lou a chance to escape her mole-like existence. As she drives north, she becomes free: "There was a Rubicon near the height of land. When she crossed it, she began to feel free. She sped north to the highlands, lightheaded" (pp. 17-18). She has been in this part of the country before and associates it with some childhood loss or perhaps, in true pastoral fashion, with the loss of childhood and innocence (p. 19). Even before she gets to Pennarth and meets the bear, she feels the awakening of a new self and writes a card to the Director saying, "I have an odd sense . . . of being reborn" (p. 19). With such romantic expectations, she is ready for what happens to her in the wilderness. Nature is not all good and pleasant (the bugs bite her, and her garden is not a success), but it is full of "magical forms," and she enters "the forest solemnly, as if she were trespassing in a foreign church" (p. 47). Even the negative aspects of nature, however, are things she desperately wants to romanticize:

> She was trying to decide to regard the black flies as a good sympton of the liveliness of the North, a sign that nature will never capitulate, that man is red in tooth and claw but there is something that cannot be controlled by him. (pp. 71-72)

The tendency to romanticize nature is a strong element in Lou, but when her leg streams blood, she is forced to admit defeat and go indoors.

Her old identity seems to be slipping away, and in the midst of nature her job seems useless to her. Lou "always attempted to be orderly, to catalogue her thoughts and feelings . . . She justified herself by saying that she was of service, that she ordered fragments of other lives." This job is particularly futile since her entries on cataloguing cards can't capture the truth about the Carys as Homer's stories about them do:

> Here, however, she could not justify herself. What was the use of all these cards and details and orderings? In the beginning they had seemed beautiful . . . capable of

> being in the end filed and sorted so that she could find a structure, plumb a secret. Now, they filled her with guilt; she felt there would never, ever, be anything as revealing and vivid as Homer's story, or as relevant. They were a heresy against the real truth.
>
> You could take any life and shuffle it on cards . . . and it would have a kind of meaning; but you could never make a file card that said, "Campbell, Homer" convey any of the meaning that Homer had conveyed tonight. She would soon have to admit that up here she was term-serving, putting in time until she died. Colonel Cary was surely one of the great irrelevancies of Canadian history and she was another. Neither of them was connected to anything. (pp. 83-84)

Although Lou seems proud of herself for not being a mere tourist in the wilderness, she is much like the Carys (with the exception, perhaps, of Jocelyn who worked a trap line to make a living) in not being "connected" to the land on which she lives.

She makes a kind of connection with the wilderness and with her inner being by loving the bear. Even though she reassures herself that "she did not believe in non-rational processes," she relates to nature and to the bear in a totally non-rational way (p. 71). In her loneliness and longing for human contact, Lou turns to the bear. The morning after they are intimate for the first time, "wisps of guilt trailed around the edges of her consciousness," but then "she tested herself, pinching her conscience here and there to see if she felt evil. She felt loved" (p. 94). And later she thinks:

> She knew now that she loved him. She loved him with such an extravagance that the rest of the world had turned into a tight meaningless knot, except for the landscape, which remained outside them, neutral, having its own orgasms of summer weather. (p. 117)
>
> She knew now that she loved him, loved him with a clean passion she had never felt before. (p. 118)

Her love for the bear makes her want to go back to old ways such as preserving food for the winter:

> she spent the afternoons . . . lazing in the sun with the bear, thinking of the things she would have to do if she were to stay with him all winter, thinking herself into a rugged, pastoral past that it was too late to grasp. (p. 130)

She enjoys remembering fresh buttermilk, succotash, homemade soup, and flat-irons. Clearly her relationship with the wild is related to nostalgia for past domestic technologies.

It appears that Lou believes that her relationship with the bear is the solution to all her problems, that it will cure her "gangrenous" soul and give her a new identity (p. 92). She recalls how her autonomy was ignored by her former lover, "a man of elegance and charm" (p. 118). She remembers her relationship with the Director, only "a sexual connection," and vows never to "lie back on a desk again, not ever, ever " (p. 118, p. 109). Perhaps she has learned from her feeling for the bear that loveless sex is bad. At the end of the summer she goes back to the city, seemingly a new person who will get a new job and live a new life sustained by her experience with the bear. She has changed, she says:

> That [last] night, lying clothed and tenderly beside him by the fire, she was a babe, a child, an innocent. . . .
>
> What had passed to her from him she did not know. Certainly it was not the seed of heroes, or magic, or any astounding virtue, for she continued to be herself. But for one strange, sharp moment she could feel in her pores and the taste of her own mouth that she knew what the world was for. She felt not that she was at last human, but that she was at last clean. Clean and simple and proud. (pp. 136-37)

What has changed her primarily is the one time, the "strange, sharp moment" that she mentions, that the bear does get aroused and rakes her back with one large paw. One possible explanation for this action is that the bear has finally accepted her as female partner and the gesture that results in her wounded back is part of a male bear's "courtship" of the female. However, the pain Lou feels is an indication that she is not a fit mate for the bear. Also possible, is that the bear's gesture is a warning that Lou is going too far in her relationship with the bear. She has gone, at any rate, as far as she can go; and for a romantic "extremist" that is far from conventional behavior. In any case, the bear's action makes her realize that she cannot continue her pastoral life in the wilderness and must go back home. Still, she sees her experience as positive--even the wound that the bear inflicts: "I shall keep that, she thought. And it is not the mark of Cain " (p. 134). For her it is not a mark of guilt; perhaps she takes it as a mark of the bear's acceptance of her.

If the novel is read as pastoral fairy tale with the bear in the role of gamekeeper, or other "primitive" man, the implications of Lou's experience with the bear can be seen. Maybe she has learned that to be over-civilized (like Beau Brummell "who would not touch reality with a barge-pole" and so ended up dying dirty and insane--p. 57) and cut off from nature, both inner and outer, is not good; but surely Engel doesn't mean that such an insight depends on a sexual encounter with an animal. The trouble seems to be that Lou's relationship with the bear is not presented in symbolic terms but realistically, and Lou is not mad like the narrator in Surfacing so we are more likely to accept her ideas at face value. Her experience seems to be presented in lyrical terms as a most positive one, but should the reader think of it as a desirable one? Perhaps the answer will depend on how one judges Lou's perception and expectations of the bear.

To Lou, the bear is the unknown, both within her and outside her. Before she meets him, she thinks, "maybe I'll start on the books first, work from the known to the unknown" and later, "a bear is more an island than a man, she thought. To a human " (p. 32, p. 60). Therefore, knowing a bear is more of a challenge than knowing a man: "There was a depth in him [the bear] she could not reach, could not probe and with her intellectual fingers destroy " (p. 119). Homer warns her, "Don't forget, however human it looks, it's a wild critter after all. Don't get soft with it " (p. 40). Lou does forget; and she seems to be much more concerned with finding her new identity and in the process neglects the bear's identity. From the beginning she anthropomorphizes the bear:

> It had small, sad eyes. (p. 34)
> It looked stupid and defeated. (p. 35)
> Not at all menacing. Not a creature of the wild, but a middle-aged woman defeated to the point of being daft. (p. 36)

She expects to see in him emotions that she can label: "She watched his face as his bowels moved, half-amused at herself to be looking for emotion, and there was none " (p. 71). If he has no emotion when performing such a simple physical act, then she would probably be wrong to expect any emotion in him during more complex activities involving her. When he rakes her back and she turns around to look at him, "she could see nothing, nothing, in his face to tell her what to do " (p. 132). She seems to expect him to have and show emotion as if he were a human being, and yet she doesn't want the numerous problems that a human relationship would entail. "She had discovered she could paint any face on him that she wanted, while his actual range of expression was a mystery" (p. 72). She can't do this so readily with people; maybe that is one reason why she prefers the bear to a man. He is even less demanding a lover than is Joe in Surfacing. From all the details that we are given, the bear can be judged as the most satisfactory lover that Lou has had, and yet "it struck her when she opened the door to him that she always expected it to be someone else " (p. 89). She seems to want the bear to turn into her Prince Charming who will rescue her from her problems and from her dull life. It seems that she, like the narrator of Surfacing, does not want a relationship with either an "average" man (when she has sex with Homer, "she felt nothing with him, nothing" --p. 126) or with a real bear but rather with a bear that transforms into a prince, an ideal lover in a fairy tale world. At one point she asks, "Bear, make me comfortable in the world at last " (p. 112). She asks for too much; no one can do that for another person except in the context of the magic of fairy tales or wishful thinking.

At the end Lou "remembered the claw that had healed guilt. She felt strong and pure " (p. 140). If the claw heals guilt and the pain is expiation or penance, what is the "sin" then? Her sin might be the denial of the instinctual life within her, but equally possible is the interpretation that her sin consists of seeing the bear as a person and reading human qualities into a non-human creature; and the bear's wounding of Lou could be defence of his own identity. Maybe she has been as guilty as all other people who anthropomorphize animals or nature in general. The first time Lou sees the bear she thinks, "Everyone has once in his life to decide whether he is a Platonist or not . . . That is a bear. Not a toy bear, not a Pooh bear, not an airlines Koala bear. A real bear " (p. 34). She seems, here, to decide to be a Platonist and regard the bear as "a real bear" but gradually she forgets his "bearness" and infringes on his identity as real bear. She makes him her "lover, God or friend " (p. 134). However, she is not so totally involved in her experience with the bear that she doesn't occasionally pass judgement on herself and, by implication, on the way she sees the bear and creates an identity for him. The devil in her dream says:

> The trouble with you Ontario girls is you never acquire any kind of sophistication. You're deceiving yourself about that bear: he's about as interesting as an ottoman: as you, in fact. (p. 124)

After the bear rakes her back, Lou thinks, "He ripped me . . . That's what I was after, wasn't it, decadent little city tart?" and, "I am a fool" (p. 133). When the bear is taken away to hibernate safely for the winter, he "did not look back. She did not expect him to " (p. 138). Maybe Lou has learned that much at least: not to expect the bear to be a human being and have human qualities and not to expect him to serve as a symbol. By the time she leaves Pennarth she has stopped seeing the house as a "symbol" of Canadian history and can see it as an "entity"--"the white house behind her stood frail and simple too: no longer a symbol, but an entity." (p. 137). Perhaps she can stop seeing the bear as a "symbol" of nature, or of human nature, and simply see him as an "entity"--a bear. She comments on her feelings for the bear: "She stood in the doorway of the bear's old byre and inhaled his randy pong. Really, she thought, really " (p. 140). Perhaps those last words can sum up a reader's reaction to Lou's experience and her assumption that it has changed her identity and made her ready for a new start in the city. If she has indeed stopped seeing nature in romantic and symbolic terms, however, she has learned something that could drastically change her life.

[22] One of the few examples in Surfacing of a good relationship between a man and a woman is the narrator's memory of her parents sawing wood: "Our mother and father at the sawhorse behind the cabin, mother holding the tree, white birch, father sawing, sun through the branches lighting their hair, grace " (p. 138). This could be taken as another example of nostalgia for a particular outmoded technology (probably a hand saw in this case) much like the narrator's nostalgia for the cross-cut saw in Drew's "Wood." Or else it can be seen as an instance of unity of effort, useful work done with grace, harmony between a man and a woman--none of which the narrator has herself experienced in any setting, whether city or wilderness. Now she finally has the chance and perhaps the wisdom to achieve such a relationship with another person.

[23] To find one's true identity through madness and especially through madness in the wilderness is a romantic idea. Gloria Onley claims that "a presumed primitive, non-linear, and pluralistic state of being . . . [emerges] in Surfacing as a utopian alternative to alienation" ("Power Politics in Bluebeard's Castle," pp. 35-36). Such a state of being can be attained by "going down into forest, swamp, and water, into a primitive Edenic reality where frogs, no longer revolting or worthless, become fellow creatures of the biosphere" (p. 31). Perhaps this romantic experience is beneficial to the narrator, but surely Atwood is not suggesting that to be human and not alienated from nature one must either be mad or animal-like. More to the point, the author shows her character coming to see that she cannot survive alone in the wilderness as an animal, however tempting and desirable such an alternative might be. Whether such a life is "a utopian alternative to alienation" is debatable; but certainly to continue living in a primitive, non-linear, pluralistic state of being in the wilderness is not possible for the narrator.

Because of the narrator's obsessive search for identity in the wilderness, one could label her an "American" heroine and Atwood as basically an "American" writer if one followed Robin Mathews' comments about Survival. The search for identity that is individual and experienced in nature makes a person a "liberal individualist anarchist," he claims, and American literature is full of such people ("'Survival and Struggle in Canadian Literature': a review of Margaret Atwood's Survival," This Magazine is about Schools, 6:4 [1972], 111). In fact, such basic ideas as alienation from nature and personal salvation through a return to nature are essentially American (p. 113). That would make anyone who adopts the ideology of romantic pastoralism an "American." In criticizing Survival Mathews says that Atwood's

> definition of liberation becomes so "liberal" as to be almost meaningless. In fact, the definition approaches that of a particularly pernicious branch of U.S. imperialist writing, which calls for liberation through personal relation to place or "locus", as they call it. But the liberation talked of by these American writers is almost entirely a personal one and rarely connects private and public virtue. (p. 118)

However, if Surfacing is looked at in the way I have described, it becomes much more "Canadian" and less "American."

Chapter IV

[1] Russell M. Brown, "Expatriate Variations," Canadian Literature, 54 (Autumn 1972), 94. Simpson wants us to become aware of the power that technology has over our lives. In an interview with Lorraine McMullen he said that

> we usually aren't even aware of the kinds of society we're living in. . . . the quality of life of the people isn't controlled by government at all, it's controlled by large technological units. That starts to affect us early, it forces pragmatic education for instance. ("A Conversation with Leo Simpson," Journal of Canadian Fiction, 4:1 [1975], 116)

Technology can be good or bad but very often it can be good and bad at the same time: "Technology provides us with good things, like advanced medicine, but a lot of the time we wouldn't need the advanced medicine if we did not have the technology " (p. 116). He gives the examples of antibiotics that help so many people and yet give rise to severe allergies in others and of tranquillizers that help people cope with problems that might not exist in a different, less technological society. Even worse, perhaps, is that TV brings the horror of other people suffering and dying close to us but does nothing to enable us to help them: "We're taking a terrible beating from technology because it has the power to affect us but we haven't the power to react to it. . . . we should be aware that we are being tyrannized " (p. 116).

[2] Leo Simpson, Arkwright (Toronto: Macmillan, 1971), p. 236.

[3] It seems that islands are often important to the pastoral impulse and that "islanding" one's life is a misanthropic act. Although the narrator in Surfacing denies that her father hated people and only thought that they were more unpredictable than animals, her denial plants in the reader's mind the suspicion that maybe he did hate people and for that reason wanted to withdraw to live on an island in the wilderness. Addison Arkwright also wants to separate himself from people. An arkwright is one who builds an ark; and although Addison does not literally build an ark as Noah did, his obsessive desire to live on an island has the same implications. Noah, who built an ark and stocked it with animals, was separated from other people by God as being morally better and worth saving. So it is with Addison. He selects himself (and in the world in which he lives he can hardly be blamed for wanting to be better than the other people) as being morally better and worth saving and escapes to his island. In But We are Exiles Peter Guy's life as pilot of a boat on the Mackenzie River is tainted by misanthropy. In The Wabeno Feast MacKay's fort is like a self-made island in the wilderness, and in Engel's Bear the first Colonel Cary "had become attached to the idea of living on an island " (p. 15).

The British Isles obviously were too big an island to count as one--and too crowded with people. Colonel Cary left home to come to North America in 1826. A few years later he left his wife and family in Toronto and withdrew to live the last forty-five years of his life in the wilderness at Pennarth on Cary's Island. His only contact with the outside world seems to have been the books he bought for his library. Romantically, Lou thinks that Cary was possessed by "some big dream" and that he was "adventurous, big-spirited, romantic. There was room for him in the woods " (p. 92). Perhaps, however, his motive was simply a dislike of people and the desire for isolation and self-sufficiency. His grand-daughter, Colonel Jocelyn Cary, too, didn't like people and lived alone at Pennarth.

Lou's love of Pennarth can be seen to be connected with misanthropy, too. She has longed to live on an island, and even in a city full of people she has made her life an island life that touches the lives of very few people (p. 18). "She had always loved her loneliness" and has no friends (p. 29). In the city she tried to make her life a self-contained island, and in the wilderness the environment again mirrors her psychological state. At one point she thinks, "So this was her kingdom: an octagonal house, a roomful of books, and a bear " (p. 29). She has a good roof over her head, food that is easily available, solitary work that she enjoys, and a dependable and undemanding non-human sexual companion: could there possibly be a better situation for someone who doesn't like people? Lou's island retreat supplies all the things she values, and the bothersome human element intrudes only in the occasional letter from outside and the weekly visits by Homer.

Lou is like a latter-day Robinson Crusoe. "Everyone wants to be Robinson Crusoe and to be a half-hatched Robinson Crusoe is almost unbearable," she says (p. 42). On his desert island Crusoe made a miniature of the society he left behind; although a castaway, he brought heavy mental baggage in the form of middle-class, capitalist values that he imposed on his environment. Cary, choosing a self-imposed exile, epitomized the colonial mind; his house was of impractical American design and all his books except for *Wacousta* were imported from Europe and were about Europe. He brought with him, too, raspberry bushes, apple trees, and asparagus to improve the wilderness. To Lou being a Robinson Crusoe doesn't mean only being alone; she also wants to work and be "virtuous and efficient" so that rewards of joy will be hers (p. 42). Thus, she too brings her values with her but supposes that she can leave her problems behind. "On an island she could not get lost," Lou thinks, and perhaps it is fear of getting lost in a large world full of people that induces some to choose to live on islands, whether they be literal or figurative (p. 47).

Finally, in *The Diviners* Morag Gunn wonders if she should have brought up her daughter in cities and muses upon the idea of pastoralism as the making of "islands":

> Instead, I've made an island. Are islands real? . . . Morag Gunn, who rails against the continuing lies of the media, does not, it will be noted, establish her own hand-set press. Islands are unreal. No place is far enough away. Islands exist only in the head. And yet I stay. . . . it may be a fantasy. But I can bear to live here, until I die, and I couldn't elsewhere.
> ([Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974], p. 292)

Morag has chosen an "island" where she can bear to live but realizes that her life has an air of unreality about it and, also, that no place is far enough away to escape people and problems entirely. Only in the head, in the imagination, can the perfect island or the perfect pastoral retreat be created.

[4] Russell Brown claims that Simpson allows Addison "some final measure of the redemption he so unendingly strives for" ("Expatriate Variations", p. 95). However, if there is any redemption allowed Addison, it must be a very qualified one. Brown says that Addison learns from McGrath who learns from the poet Charlton "to let it all in":

> Addison's final epiphany . . . is his realization that the duality on which he has based his actions has no basis. He no more needs to kill off the old Addison than Charlton needed to turn off the Squeasy ad . . . When he realizes that energy and sanity need not be opposed, he achieves a union of the two, attaining the possibility of peace for himself and becoming a pattern for all men and for society. (p. 96)

If this is the case, why does Addison still feel at the end that he can make a new identity and a new life for himself on Crete? If he has abandoned the idea of duality and achieved a personal inner peace, he could live in Toronto as the old Addison and not feel that he needs to get away to a distant island.

[5] Leo Simpson, The Peacock Papers (Toronto: Macmillan, 1973), p. 3.

[6] It is in the nature of satire to take sides, and in The Peacock Papers Simpson wants us on the side of Jeffrey Anchyr. Michael Dixon says that in the midst of the narration, which is fragmented, "Simpson tosses out an anchor. Jeffrey Anchyr, as he tries to resolve his own confrontation with apocalypse, arbitrates between Royce and Peacock, and defines a point of view" (untitled review, Canadian Forum, 54 [July 1974], 37). Dixon goes on to explain that Anchyr

> longs, in effect, for anticlimactic apocalypse, apocalypse without catastrophe, complete freedom from convention and responsibility. At the appointed hour Anchyr feels suddenly liberated . . . But Simpson mimics the medium only to question the message. Anchyr's euphoria transmutes quickly to despair, because in escaping from the narcotic effects of dehumanizing routine he also becomes sensitized to the previously unfelt suffering, folly, and barbarity of the world. . . . his ethos, thus distinguished from the social norm, becomes the satiric perspective of the novel. Peacock is his only kindred spirit. Through this alliance, Simpson defines, by exclusion, all other characters as both satiric targets and manifestations of Royceanism. (p. 37)

[7] Another person who is devoted to the printed word, although in a different way from Anchyr, is his mother-in-law, Mrs. Campbell. From reading books sent to her by her book club, Mrs. Campbell seems to be turning into a "Jewish mama" or a "maternal chauvinist" (p. 154). She has read "numerous novels by tormented young Jewish writers" but misses the humour and irony in them and considers the mothers portrayed by these writers "as embodiments of her own stifled vocation " (p. 26, p. 27).

She has become obsessed with food and sends parcels of it to Cathy. For her the novels are sources where she can learn "the principles of illogical rhetoric and the philosophy of emotional anarchy " (p. 27). She writes to her favourite writer, Mr. Rothman, to get the address of his mother so that she can get advice from that woman on how to be a more "successful" mother. Then she begins to correspond with mothers of seventeen other writers, mostly Jewish mothers but a few Irish and Italian, in order to perfect her technique.

[8] "Linguistic parody . . . is the central strategy of satiric wit in this bizarre confrontation" between Peacock and Royce, Dixon says (p. 36). "So exact are the imitations [of Peacock and McLuhan] that both seem to lack the exaggeration of parody, yet both convey a sense of hyperbole, Royce's because it abstracts what is destructive in McLuhan's thought and pushes it to absurdly prescriptive extremes, and Peacock's because its style is violently anachronistic " (p. 36).

[9] What Anchyr's psychiatrist says about him could probably apply to Peacock as well: "Patient is conservative, defensive of the status quo, changes represent themselves as the end of the world, and he is using as a general symbol of threatening change some improvements in the information service at the Bradfarrow Public Library" (p. 161).

[10] In the interview with McMullen, Simpson explained the importance of the canoe to Canadians:

> the Americans yearn for a lost frontier, and Canadians seem to yearn for something that has got to do with canoes. . . . The canoe is an extremely symbolic and a very important part of Canadian urban life. It is an urban phenomenon. (p. 117)

Just as pastoralism as a whole is an urban phenomenon, so is the nostalgia for or romanticization of the canoe, which is a past technology: for people who used them every day canoes were not symbols. Simpson extends his comments about the canoe to include the romantic attitude Canadians have about nature:

> I think in writing it has been taken . . . to a ridiculous extent so that we always have a canoe navigating a rapid, or we always have a communion with the wilderness, or somebody by a lake. . . . I think it is time that we finally grew up about that. (p. 117)

This is Simpson's reason for introducing the "pine tree and canoe" school of writing in The Peacock Papers.

[11] Simpson objects rather vehemently to the idealization and romanticization of the Indian:

> Most Indians that are imagined don't make jokes, because they have mystical attributes. . . . All the Indians are moral, in their own way of life. If they are corrupted, it is not by their nature, it is by the white man. . . . the only good white men are those who have sympathy for the Indians. This sort of imagining is romantic. The reality we know about Indians is that they never invented anything of any use. . . . The virtues they're credited with seem to me to be virtues by default. (McMullen, p. 118)

The only thing Indians were good at, says Simpson, was torture. It is obvious from this statement that he is miles removed from Wayland Drew's approval of Indians of the past and their way of life. Simpson seems to minimize the harm that the white people have done to the Indians and judges progress and accomplishment according to the European ideology and technology that Drew deplores.

[12] Simpson's Cumrum Indians are used to satirize those who idealize Indians. He says:

> They were very moral and ethical too, and they were abused and murdered in the usual way. But when they abandoned the morality and their perfect ethical system they became prosperous, and they were able to afford houses and cars, and all the things we have right now, so they had a happy ending. (McMullen, p. 119)

Simpson seems to be saying here that Indians are no better or worse than anyone else and that to idealize them does them no good.

[13] No one remembered to cancel the Indians when the apocalypse was called off. "The next chapter corrects the mistake. Thus the novel's climax is anticlimactic and itself depicts an anticlimactic apocalypse; surely the ultimate oxymoron " (Dixon, p. 37).

[14] Simpson says that The Peacock Papers is not a pessimistic story but rather "a satire on pessimistic novels" (McMullen, p. 119). He continues: "My outlook is cheery, although a cheery outlook is a killer as far as literary reputation is concerned. You can do more with gloom " (p. 120).

[15] Leo Simpson, "The Savages", in David Helwig and Joan Harcourt, eds., 73: New Canadian Stories (Ottawa: Oberon Press, 1973), p. 145.

[16] Simpson admits that "The Savages" is a pessimistic story because both sides are savages. Polson "is dehumanized by what he does, and so his fantasies become inhuman. They are not unusual fantasies, either " (McMullen, p. 119). Perhaps it is the prevalence and the social acceptability of such fantasies that is the most frightening implication of the story.

Chapter V

[1] Mordecai Richler, A Choice of Enemies (Aylesbury: Quartet/ Paperjacks, 1973), p. 69.

[2] Graeme Gibson, "Interview with Mordecai Richler,"in Eleven Canadian Novelists (Toronto: Anansi, 1973), p. 271, p. 298.

[3] Mordecai Richler, Son of a Smaller Hero (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1965), p. 101.

[4] Mordecai Richler, The Incomparable Atuk (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1963), p. 109.

[5] Movies are an important part of Richler's life, but although he has written many filmscripts during his years in London, he still prefers to write novels and does not go along with those who prophesy that the age of film has marked the death of the novel. However, in his opinion, the ascendency of film has influenced the novel, and many "best-sellers take on the characteristics of film. . . . they are already films. The technique is the same" (Shovelling Trouble [Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972], p. 90). He seems to be a keen movie-goer but not an uncritical one. Even the good movies aren't as good as they are reported to be, he complains, and the reason for this is that they are "for the most part, shamelessly derivative, taking up a position abandoned by novelists years ago" (Hunting Tigers under Glass [London: Panther, 1971], p. 103). Elsewhere in the same collection of essays Richler suggests that films rather than particular buildings are what Expo will be remembered for. The films have great impact:

> Films charge at you everywhere, from multiple and wrap-around screens, bounced off floors, stone walls, mirrors, and what-not. Alas, the pyrotechnics, the dazzling techniques, conceal, for the most part, nothing more than old-fashioned documentaries. (p. 40)

Even here he seems to be suggesting that novelists are more adventurous and that the novel is a form more adaptable to serious experimentation.

[6] Mordecai Richler, Cocksure (New York: Bantam, 1969), p. 138.

[7] In an interesting article on the vicarious lives that some of Richler's characters lead, G. David Sheps writes:

> As Polly's imagination always sees herself as a motion picture image, she finds it unnecessary to provide the continuity of action herself. Her mind, unable to differentiate between actual experience and a cinematic imitation of it, completes therefore the incompleted action as she imagines the police rescuing Mortimer. In this way, Richler has used the mimetic illusions of cinematographic technique as a literary narrative style for conveying the manner in which his characters have been shaped by the influences of a manufactured popular culture and cannot distinguish between appearance and

> reality. ("Waiting for Joey: The Theme of the Vicarious in St. Urbain's Horseman," Journal of Canadian Fiction, 3:1 [Winter 1974], 83)

In addition, the kinds of characters and their milieu that Richler has chosen to write about has affected his narrative technique in several ways:

> Cocksure . . . is overtly written on the level of fantasy and makes no more concessions to the canons of verisimilitude and plausibility than does an animated cartoon. The sudden fadeouts, the rapid juxtapositions of disparate images such as would be achieved by the splicing of film, the discontinuities of time and space, the interuptions [interruptions] of linear sequence, the distortion of narrative event, and the elongations, foreshortenings and transformations of visual image and event which are so readily achieved by the techniques of the cinema are fairly easily assimilated by the literary mode of caricature which Richler employs as his dominant style in Cocksure and The Incomparable Atuk. (pp. 83-84)

In Marian Engel's The Honeyman Festival we are given a portrait of a woman who is not "movie-minded" in the way that Polly Morgan is and whose consciousness does not seem to have been changed much by technology. Minn Burge sees very clearly the difference between her present life (her "more real" life, as she puts it) and the years she spent on the fringes of the movie industry in Europe. She left Godwin, a "tight, unforgiving, righteous" Ontario town, and an ultra-respectable middle-class life at the age of twenty and was able, with the help of a forty-inch bust, to secure bit parts in movies and a movie-director as lover ([Toronto: Anansi, 1970], p. 29). Joan Foster in Atwood's Lady Oracle believes that she was named after Joan Crawford; and part of her failure in life stems from the knowledge that she is not thin and glamorous like Joan Crawford. Minn seems to have been named after film star Esther Williams, but for film work she takes a more fitting name: Elizabeth Borden. Lizzie Borden is thought to have hacked her parents to death with an axe; and if Minn's parents had ever seen her exposed legs and bosom on film, the effect would have been as devastating as a blow with an axe. Now, all that's left of her years in the movies is a poster "of herself pasted on a peeling Italian wall, all but unrecognizable, a banner labeled OGGI over her cleavage" (p. 17).

Now Esther Minetta Williams has a third identity as Minn Burge, wife and mother. Her movie life seems unreal to her now; she finds more reality in plumbing than in movies and feels more continuity with her childhood and adolescence in Godwin than with her years connected to the movie industry (p. 32). She is now pregnant with her fourth child and spends her time worrying about worming the children, washing clothes, and thinking about the temptations that her absent journalist husband might be enduring. In contrast to her seductive appearance in the past, she is now fat, ugly, and hairy (p. 3). Once she had a low, sexy voice useful for dubbing foreign movies into English; now her voice is shrill with yelling at the children. As a contrast to the truffled patés, exotic wines, and wild boars that she consumed with Honeyman, she now must interest herself in children's leftovers, beer, and peanut butter sandwiches. She considers that an important part of her life is now over, that it is the turn of her children to have adventures.

Although Minn accepts the fact that her movie-life is over, she does occasionally compare her present life to it and her perception of it is sometimes influenced by her knowledge of and experience in movies. For example, she judges Jane-Regina's fake emotion by remembering that movie actresses use glycerine to make their eyes weepy and emotional-looking (p. 19). And after she attacks the policeman who wants to enter her house without a search warrant, she sees that "he stood in the doorway, very Western movie, gun on hip. 'Let's get moving,' he said to his podner " (p. 119). Also, Minn still talks to Honeyman in her head, and she sees that she has made her house into a kind of movie set:

> she stood still in front of her own taste and wondered, not for the first time, why she had made the house . . . so oddly theatrical. It was like a set, it expected a cast, klieg lights, a director and for ceilings the cord-wound rafters of an arena. People should come out of nowhere into this house, put on jobs and personalities, shout at each other . . . (p. 13)

However, when people do "come out of nowhere" for the party, Minn finds the experience disappointing. It seems to have little to do with her "real" life of cockroaches and dirty diapers.

Minn's sense of time and the passing of time seems to her to be old-fashioned. She is not "modern." She thinks: "Loathe plastic. Don't own anything non-mechanical made after 1928. Must try to adjust, be modern," not like a second Mrs. Oliphant (p. 129). But she thinks of herself in outmoded imagery; she feels like a tired, worn-out cart-horse, "imagery stuck in a dead world " (p. 113). The passage of time can be measured by the change in technology; she remembers wooden snowplows pulled by horses when she was a child--"then, suddenly, there was a kind of tractor " (p. 113). The passage of time is marked by the changes Minn sees around her, especially by the continual change of cult-figures in the film world:

> Lord, let there be no more festivals. Tonight was enough. I do not love the blow-up of Honeyman on the wall. Those eyes are closed now, and I am another person. Young Cal no more the distressed teen-ager, Paris another town. The Royale is Le Drug-Store. Honeyman is dead. Godard is the great film maker, soon to be superceded [superseded]. Let the world move on.
>
> . . . God, they were making cult-figures as fast as they could find them, had Christianity gone out for film-worship? (p. 97)

Minn thinks that this may be the last festival commemorating Honeyman: "the wave is finished. . . . The big blow-up of Honeyman is torn at the corners. Six sets of staples in it were enough " (p. 18). Godard is "in" at present and soon enough will be succeeded by the next cult-figure. For Reiner, time is divided into film festival periods since he specializes in "cinematic resurrection": Minn "wondered wryly what Honeyman would have thought of Reiner, who divided the year into months and the months into Festivals of movie directors " (p. 39). To Honeyman it was more real to divide the year into two parts, as in his statement: "Barefoot in the winter, pregnant in the summer" (p. 88). Minn has tried to control this kind of cycle (although with limited success) by using a variety of birth control methods. For her, though, time is divided into long periods of city living broken up with brief visits to her childhood home: "her own spiritual weather . . . required cyclical returns to the countryside " (p. 71). The illustration on the cover of the novel emphasizes the importance of time to people. The Venus of Willendorf figure suggests that while the body knows only the natural cycle of growth and decay, the mind values and finds necessary the divisions of time into seconds, minutes, hours, days,and months. This kind of modification of consciousness by technology is of such long standing and is so ingrained in people that it seems to have become part of human nature.

In a way, too, Minn specializes in "cinematic resurrection" but with her own past as the subject matter--sometimes her years with Honeyman but especially her youth and adolescence in Godwin. They were real and memories of them still are real. Like Morag Gunn in The Diviners, Minn has a storehouse of private movies in her head:

> how odd it was that tonight when she might legitimately have taken herself upstairs with a bottle of Scotch to gruel over memories of Honeyman until his festival began, the sound-and-light show of her subconscious sent flickering across her vacant mind the images of Godwin as if it were the only frame of reference with the place years ago, but here in her vulnerable hour it rose before her again, more real and larger than ever before, like a movie . . .
>
> You could, though, you know: and she began to see it in frames. (p. 40)

Perhaps dwelling in memory is self-indulgent, but Minn asks herself, "And why not send the mind to dwell on it before it is entirely gone?" (p. 41). All of Honeyman's "meticulous work and the machinery of that enormous industry" were "geared to silly stories about never-never-land " (p. 41). Instead of dealing with the lives of ordinary but real people, Hollywood and other movie centres at that time left realism to the Russians. Honeyman, for instance, did horse-operas, Italian comic-books, and French histories because they sold well. And yet realism isn't necessarily what brings tears to the eyes of the movie-goer and appeals to his imagination. When Minn saw Pollyanna in France, she wept for home although her home was nothing like the one portrayed in that movie. Perhaps because of the influence of movies on her consciousness, scenes of the youth of Gertrude and Alice, her mother and her aunt, flash through her mind, and she asks Honeyman:

> Picturesque, isn't it? But you'd want something bigger and more dramatic to make a film, the big lurching movement to climax or fall. Something that had a recognizable pattern, something clear. The pioneer family at table cutting into the side of beef, hired man at the end glooming at the pretty table. At a Honeyman picnic nobody ever corked the wine. (p. 43)

But the kind of picturesque, or call it soft-pastoral, material that Honeyman would want is not true to life. Minn thinks that he would judge the reality of farm life as not fit material for a movie:

> But they didn't drink wine, and not many of the girls were pretty. They cooked their beef black until it was dry in the middle. When they had a hired man he ate alone in the back kitchen. The pioneer schoolmistress was not there to get laid, the boys ran away from the fields to the war with gay faces. The farmsteads had a quiet about them we value now; otherwise they were undistinguished. Life did not make art. (pp. 43-44)

It does now, however. The kinds of things Minn describes as being undistinguished are the very things that Canadian novelists, and to some extent Canadian movie-makers, use as material for their art.

Minn Burge regards her life as a "chosen catastrophe" and sometimes longs to escape to "a bee-loud glade" but knows that she can't (p. 29, p. 30). She has an idea, briefly held, of living in the country:

> Drop out of the city, move. Damn covetous eyes always on Mother's house. No, get a cabin, some land, some goats. Own cheeses. . . .
>
> Now or never, return to the land. Put up berries in brandy. Stout snakes-and-ladders fence around the garden. Who'll work the posthole-digger, who'll pay the man? Quick, come, Ben's in the bears . . . (p. 86)

But she knows that she would probably hate those cheeses, and it is clear that the problems of living in the country would be as overwhelming for her as those she faces in the city. To her the choice of a young son attacked by a bear or run over by a car in Toronto traffic is not much of a choice at all. When Cal Honeyman invites Minn and the children "out to the ranch," he says, "You oughta come out and live with us out in Denver where the air is clean," and Minn replies with realistic, anti-pastoral words, "They make poison gas in Denver " (p. 89). Cal maintains that it is better if "those little kids could be runnin' in the country," but Minn knows that she has no choice and that the country is not necessarily a better and safer place (p. 90). She knows that "the mind has molehills and they lead to tunnels of escape " (p. 96). Everyone has them. She would need her tunnels of escape whether she were in the country or in the city. Technology in the form of old movies on TV provides the escape; her memories of the past (a kind of private movie always ready to roll) are other tunnels of escape. Sometimes Minn doesn't "want reality to interfere with her attempts to maintain a poetic view of life " (p. 126). Sometimes she plays with her toy-theatre and tries "to create some kind of concrete landscape of her imagination, but she never succeeded at it. . . . she had hoped to play, to fly away on their [the puppets'] backs to a personal never-never-land " (pp. 104-5). Minn uses any avenue of escape from real life that she can; but unlike Polly Morgan, Minn knows the difference between reality and the escape from it and does see the value of "real" life. Her consciousness has been influenced by movie technology but has not been totally changed by it.

[8] Mordecai Richler, St. Urbain's Horseman (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1966), p. 416.

[9] G. David Sheps, "Waiting for Joey: The Theme of the Vicarious in St. Urbain's Horseman," p. 86.

[10] In Donald Cameron's interview with the novelist, Richler maintains that the Horseman is "whatever you need . . . everyone brings their [his or her] own problems to him. So it's a kind of distorting mirror figure, really" ("Mordecai Richler: The Reticent Moralist," in Conversations with Canadian Novelists ([Toronto: Macmillan, 1973], p. 124). And when interviewed by John Metcalf, Richler said:

> There is a strong religious note at the end which very few critics picked up which had to do with false gods. Where he goes on to think about Aaron--that his name should be Aaron. No one seems to realise that the Horseman is a Golden Calf that he's made for himself. ("Black Humour: An Interview [with] Mordecai Richler," Journal of Canadian Fiction, 3:1 [Winter 1974], p. 76)

[11] Mordecai Richler, The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), p. 50.

[12] Richler says, "Where Duddy Kravitz sprung from the boys grew up dirty and sad, spiky also, like grass beside the railroad tracks " (p. 45). There seems to be a suggestion here that if the technology (the railroad) were not there, the grass would be healthy and abundant; and by analogy if the technology (and maybe even the city) did not exist, perhaps Duddy wouldn't be dirty, sad, and spiky. The environment makes the character, Richler seems to be saying; and if Duddy's environment had been different, he would not have grown up to be the person he is.

[13] Unlike some critics whose admiration of Duddy's vitality clouds their judgement regarding his ethics, John Ferns balances sympathy and judgement and decides that

> Duddy can't accept that the end does not justify the means. Simcha would have been proud to possess his grandson's farm if it had been honestly acquired. It was after all Simcha who originally told his grandson that a man without land is nobody. What is at issue is how the land is acquired and in acquiring his land Duddy has become like another Jerry Dingleman. ("Sympathy and Judgement in Mordecai Richler's The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz," Journal of Canadian Fiction, 3:1 [Winter 1974], 80)

[14] William Empson, Some Versions of Pastoral: A Study in the Pastoral Form in Literature (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), p. 20.

[15] Jake's dissatisfaction with his job and his present life is contrasted with a time when life seemed to have more order and meaning. Sheps sees that nostalgia for the past is a strong element in the character of Jake Hersh:

> he sees his life through a prism of adolescent fantasies and appears unable to come to terms with his actual situation. . . . His own trial seems to have no reality for him unless he can read about yesterday's proceedings in the morning newspaper. It is as if his own life is real only insofar as it is reflected in the mass media . . . The prism through which Jake apprehends his own experience is that of the multiple figurations of success as manufactured by the popular culture industry to whet the insatiable appetite for titillation and power of a consumer society. ("Waiting for Joey: The Theme of the Vicarious in St. Urbain's Horseman," p. 83)

Jake is much like Polly Morgan in his inability to distinguish between appearance and reality. Because he and his friends work with TV and film, they tend to live their lives at second-hand. To Jake, his boyhood in Montreal seems more real than his present life in London. Sheps points out the structure of nostalgia that supports the action of the novel:

> There is one significant difference in narrative structure between St. Urbain's Horseman and the earlier works. Time moves backwards rather than forwards. . . . This is Richler's first novel where his major character stands at the end rather than the beginning of his ambitions and he finds his successes to be empty. . . . he looks to the past with some yearning for what has been lost. . . . Now that the world of experience appears to him to have the aspect of a charade, he yearns precisely for the tumescent sense of naive expectation he once had. . . . This is the function of his childhood and adolescent fantasies. He wishes to return to the illusion that "No-Hit" Hersh could strike out Willy Mays. (pp. 86-87: the corrected version of p. 87 is found in Journal of Canadian Fiction 3:2 following p. 92)

Jake maintains links with his youth when he eats matzohs and liver sandwiches, when he associates with Harry Stein, and when he plays softball on Hampstead Heath with other middle-aged North American expatriates. It is clear that, in his relationship with his own past, Jake is a middle-aged romantic.

[16] Mordecai Richler, The Street (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1969), p. 14. George Woodcock agrees that the St. Urbain Street that Richler writes about "belongs to his memory" (Mordecai Richler [Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970], p. 56). Probably because Richler has not lived much of his adult life in Montreal, he has had to depend on his memories of the place:

> Richler's region--apart from the portable limbo of the expatriate--is not so much a physical district as the memory of an already vanished life that went on in the streets of the old Jewish ghetto of Montreal, the narrow homeland of the children of those who fled the great Russian pogroms that preceded Hitler. (p. 10)

[17] Mordecai Richler, "The harsh wonderland that was St. Lawrence Main," Maclean's Magazine, 73 (August 27, 1960), 26.

[18] John Metcalf, "A Conversation with Alice Munro," Journal of Canadian Fiction, 1:4 (1972), 56.

[19] This phrase is adapted from one used by Frye in The Bush Garden. On one occasion in this book Frye connects the natural environment with pastoralism and wonders how "in such an environment [the difficult Canadian wilderness] . . . the sentimental myth ever developed at all " (p. 244). But, he goes on to say, the myth did develop paradoxically because Canadian writers have lived "in a land where empty space and the pervasiveness of physical nature have impressed a pastoral quality on their minds " (p. 247). First he seems to imply that the pastoral myth depends on the quality or type of nature (pleasant, peaceful, and fruitful) --which it doesn't. Then he suggests that it is the proximity and pervasiveness of a more barren kind of nature that gives a "pastoral quality" to the minds of Canadian writers. Actually it is life in urban centres, a life of sophistication and complexity that is more likely to impress a pastoral quality on the mind. Pastoralism results not from the pervasiveness of nature but from a perception of change (and a desire to deny that change), often marked by the speed and pervasiveness of technological change. It is not confined either to rural or urban landscapes.

[20] Williams, p. 297. There are already a number of examples in Canadian literature to foretell a trend in the direction that Williams indicates. In his poem "Pastoral of the City Streets" A. M. Klein shows nostalgia for his boyhood in Montreal. The dray horse grazes in "meadows of macadam" (The Rocking Chair and other Poems [Toronto: Ryerson, 1948], p. 39). The children have "curbrock," "stairstump," and water from a hose as their urban substitutes for rural pleasures, and at twilight they play a last game beneath their urban tree, that "bole of the tree of the single fruit of glass/ now ripening." Another example is Hugh Hood's first novel in his projected twelve-volume series, The Swing in the Garden, which deals with a boy growing up in Toronto (Ottawa: Oberon Press, 1975). Like Klein, Richler's and Cohen's roots are in Montreal, and their writing shows some nostalgia for the old days in that city. Roch Carrier's they won't demolish me is another example of urban pastoral with Montreal as its setting. Although on the first page there is the comment "We need Nature," the main pastoral impulse is the longing for the urban scene, Dorval's neighbourhood, to remain as it is, undemolished by the bulldozer (translated by Sheila Fischman [Toronto: Anansi, 1973], p. 1). The neighbourhood is horrible, but Dorval still has nostalgia for it once it is destroyed. Moving to the country is never an alternative; cities are attractive places, for instance, because people don't have to be alone there. Dorval longs for the machines of the past much as the Cowboy longs for his horses, and he sentimentally plants a garden and dreams that the future will be like the past that he chooses to remember; but the garden is destroyed for a skyscraper site, and at the end plastic flowers are "planted" around the finished skyscraper.

In all these examples about boyhood in the city, it is change that is being written about, and that is an inevitable process. However, once bulldozers, plastic flowers, and skyscrapers have been superseded by other technology, they will serve as the subject matter of pastoral art.

Chapter VI

[1] Leonard Cohen, *The Favourite Game* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970), p. 20.

[2] Patricia Morley writes that Breavman's father "is strongly attracted to science and machinery, and awed by a burgeoning technology. The click of his gun, to the child's ears, is 'the marvellous sound of all murderous scientific achievement.' The pages of the poetry books given him at his bar mitzvah are left uncut. He presses "How To" books upon his son, who hates them increasingly as his father lies dying. The child tears at the careful diagrams " (*The Immoral Moralists: Hugh MacLennan and Leonard Cohen* [Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1972], p. 76).

[3] Michael Ondaatje, *Leonard Cohen* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970), p. 26.

[4] Desmond Pacey recognizes that "Cohen's attitude towards the machine is ambivalent: it is at once frightening and alluring" ("The Phenomenon of Leonard Cohen,"in his *Essays in Canadian Criticism 1938-1968* [Toronto: Ryerson, 1969], p. 249). Movies are "the chief contemporary expression of the magical process," magical because of "their capacity to preserve mortals after death, to confer a sort of immortality" (p. 252, p. 253). The movies do this better than any other art form. Pacey goes on to say:

> what fascinates Cohen . . . is the magical capacity of the camera to transfigure reality, to intensify experience, and to suggest symbolic overtones by its searching examination of the details of fact. (p. 253)
>
> What the slow-motion camera does is to reveal the individuality of things, the sensuous particularity of being. Cohen's belief is that the truly magical view is not attained by looking at the world through a haze of generality, or through the still frames of scientific categories, but by examining as closely as possible the particular streaks on the particular tulip. (p. 254)

Yes, the camera can transfigure reality, but its ability to do so depends on the human beings (director, cameraman, actor, etc.) involved in making the film. However, the slow-motion camera, it seems to me, does a far better job of blurring and romanticizing actuality than it does of revealing individuality and particularity. And while *some* movies have the "capacity to enlarge our experience, to provide us with vicarious living," as Pacey claims, other movies serve only to dull sensitivity or provide us with a mindless escape from life (p. 254). It is possible, however, to see that Cohen uses a cinematic technique not to make any statement about cameras or movies and their functions in society but rather to make subtle comments on his narrator--as Ondaatje recognizes.

[5] Pacey says that "the favourite game is to leave an impression on the snow, to leave behind one an interesting design, and by extension I take this to include the novel itself . . . and by further extension all artistic creation" (p. 255). For Cohen art is the absolute, and all

experience is fuel for the fires of creation. Sandra Djwa believes that in Cohen there is "an unsatisfied search for an absolute. In his world there are no fixed values, spiritual or sensual, that stand beyond the transitory moment . . . and in the shifting the values change, leaving only the value of experience made art" ("Leonard Cohen: Black Romantic," Canadian Literature, 34[Autumn 1967], 32-33). George Woodcock connects the end of The Favourite Game to Cohen's second novel: "the important thing is not really the life of the senses, but the imprinting of ourselves on the evanescence of existence . . . an aestheticist moral that leads us right into Beautiful Losers" ("The Song of the Sirens: Reflections on Leonard Cohen," in his Odysseus Ever Returning: Essays on Canadian Writers and Writing[Toronto: McClelland and Stewart], 1970, p. 107).

[6] Leonard Cohen, Beautiful Losers (New York: Bantam, 1967), p. 204.

[7] Linda Hutcheon says: "F. is at home in this world of machinery and systems. His mind plays naturally with mechanical imagery, and he passes on this ability, although his student associates machines primarily with pain . . . Even the body is seen as a machine" ("Beautiful Losers: All the Polarities," Canadian Literature, 59[Winter 1974], 53).

[8] Leslie Monkman likens F. to "Oscotarach, the Mohawk head-piercer, and de-rationalizing agent of the primitive culture which the protagonist finds so superior to the rationalist materialism of the twentieth century." In this role F. enables the narrator "to achieve ultimate fusion with the cosmic rhythms, "Monkman claims ("Beautiful Losers: Moha Myth and Jesuit Legend," Journal of Canadian Fiction, 3:3[1947], 58).

[9] Constipation is an image that Cohen uses for a destructive, closed system. "When my body starts, the old routines will start . . . Is there an outside? I am the sealed, dead, impervious museum of my appetite," the narrator comments on his condition (p. 50). His body seems to be an enemy that must be defeated by technological means. He asks,

> Why doesn't the world work for me? The lonely sitting man in the porcelain machine. . . . How can I begin anything new with all of yesterday in me? The hater of history crouched over the immaculate bowl. How can I prove the body is on my side, . . . I'll use science against you. I'll drop in pills like depth charges. . . . The straining man perched on a circle prepares to abandon all systems. (pp. 47-48)

The only way, it seems, of opting out of that "monstrous system of nourishment" that depends on the death of animals is to stop eating (p. 49). In his denial of the body, the narrator eventually does stop eating, just as Catherine and Edith had done before him.

[10] Monkman states that:

> While recognizing the elements of what Lovejoy has termed "hard primitivism" in his treatment of the savagery and rigorous living conditions of the Iroquois, Cohen's narrator still calls for Fifth Avenue "to remember its Indian trails" . . . and complains that Catherine's successors have forgotten how to build birchbark canoes.

> The particular element of Indian culture to which Cohen gives greatest emphasis is the Indian's recognition of his place in an eternal cosmic order--an awareness which distinguishes him from the representatives of white civilization. (p. 57)

Patricia Morley also recognizes that Christianity destroyed the communication Indians had with nature, but she is wrong when she says that Catherine tries to restore the lost unity between man and nature (The Immoral Moralists, p. 89). According to her uncle, Catherine is as much a destroyer as the Jesuits are: she has gone over to their side. Linda Hutcheon agrees that the French explorers and Jesuits destroy what remains of the Indians' pastoral world because "to destroy the link with nature is to deny the source of mythology" (p. 46).

[11] I use the terms "art" and "art form" in a loose, informal way: art to signify imaginative creation, something made that requires human skill as opposed to something already existing in nature--art form to indicate type of art such as the motion picture, the novel, the symphony, paintings, etc. For McLuhan the terms seem to have an evaluation attached. Art means "great" art, works of discovery by the most creative artists. Art form is less than great art with the artist only half aware of what he or she is doing. He would consider pastoral literature an art form rather than art. The great artist (such as Joyce) works through and explores "the collective night of the unconscious" and brings it to our view in "the daylight of consciousness" (The Gutenberg Galaxy [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962] p. 269).

[12] Desmond Pacey claims that "voluntary loss of self for some higher cause is, then, the main theme of Beautiful Losers" (p. 261). Stephen Scobie continues the same line of thought. The central figure steadily progresses "towards loss of self, an apocalypse of utter impersonality," but

> for "I" himself there is no "higher" cause for which the self is lost: the cause *is* the loss of self, which may be viewed as an answer to, rather than an escape from, the human predicament. ("Magic, not Magicians: Beautiful Losers and Story of O," Canadian Literature, 45 [Summer 1970], 57)

Scobie concludes that

> Our society has assumed that any answer to "the human predicament" must start with the individual's acceptance of the responsibility of his own individuality. . . . The protagonist of Beautiful Losers responds by annihilating that responsibility. (p. 60)

Death may indeed by the goal "I" attains after annihilating the responsibility for his own individuality, but what are we to think of such goals if Cohen is viewing his characters ironically?

Douglas Barbour is another critic who sees no irony in the novel. For him Beautiful Losers is an apocalyptic novel attacking Reason, History, and Time, a "religious" work "basically concerned with a religiously apocalyptic transformation of man" ("Down with History: some notes towards an understanding of Beautiful Losers," Open Letter [second series], 8 [summer 1974], 56). He says that "The old man breaks down the barriers of linear time in his final apotheosis for he has become IF, an amalgam of both men, now becoming divine, 'a movie of Ray Charles'" (p. 52). What is divine about turning into a movie of Ray Charles is not made clear; and the ambiguity of the old man's transformation into a blind, black, American entertainer is not taken into account.

However, Linda Hutcheon in her examination of Beautiful Losers finds that the "ironic reversal of images is constant throughout the novel" and points out that "to become a Ray Charles movie is not liberation for the narrator, but perhaps a symbolic capitulation to the victimizing forces" (p. 44, p. 45). She does not see why the transformation must be regarded as positive:

> It is hard to see the final transformation of the narrator into a movie as the triumph that the critics would have it. The essence of this scene lies in its ambivalence--another word, perhaps, for balance. . . . the old man totally relaxes, giving up all remaining claim to his own identity, and disappears. He merges identities with F. and the mechanical world of system that he represents. (pp. 54-54)
>
> Has the student quite literally become what the teacher desired to be? Has he entered the Promised Land? Is the Ray Charles movie an image of the final conqueror, the American mechanical cultural victimizer of Canada, or is it--as the epigraph would suggest--a symbol of the ultimate victim, the black and blind American, used for entertainment value? We cannot trust the admiring judgement of the New Jew who, labouring happily on the lever of the broken Strength Test, "loses his mind gracefully." (p. 54)

In addition, she answers Pacey's initial claim that the "voluntary loss of self for some higher cause" is to be seen in a positive light by saying:

> But just what is this higher cause? The loss of self in the novel is indeed voluntary--although in an ironic way--but it certainly gives way to nothing positive on a private or public level. Pacey seems to miss the ironic tone of the novel and neglects the message of failure in F.'s letter. Each character lives an isolated existence that ends in some form of destruction. (p. 48)

[13] Frank Davey claims that

> To Cohen, the artist is free of any obligation toward a corrupt social world and an unsatisfying physical environment . . . the free man's obligation is to achieve martyrdom by ignoring physical reality, its particularity, and its "common sense" restrictions. . . . The ultimate goal for Cohen is to annihilate one's own identity and gain the anonymity of sainthood. ("Leonard Cohen" in his From There to Here: A Guide to English-Canadian Literature since 1960 [Erin, Ontario: Press Procepic, 1974], p. 69)

The artist could be accused of being anti-social in not doing his part to clean up the messes of the world. That, however, could be the obligation of other people. Possibly, the artist's obligation consists of showing the way--not ignoring the "corrupt social world and an unsatisfying physical environment" but taking it all in and making it meaningful through art. Perhaps the duty of the artist, as Cohen sees it, is to show people that dividing life, experience, nature, etc., into twos and then assuming that a choice has to be made between them is wrong. If there is value in the garbage and the flowers, in technology and nature, life and death, etc., if all these are part of the same thing, it is through art that we can be made to see. As for Davey's statement about the artist annihilating his identity and gaining anonymity, "negative capability" has often been considered a valuable quality in the artist, but it is not synonymous with neglect of obligations toward the social world and physical environment.

[14] Michael Harris, "Leonard Cohen: The Poet as Hero.2," Saturday Night (June, 1969), 30.

[15] Morley calls the Danish Vibrator scene "one long and glorious spoof on sex," but it seems to me that it is not so much aimed at sex itself as at the obsession with extreme sexual stimulation of the type associated with pornography (The Immoral Moralists, p. 90). It is not exactly a "defence of pleasure" but rather a satire on the extreme measures that people will take to get pleasure. Morley doesn't see that the gadgets that F. and Edith use for pleasure are comparable to the non-human tools used to rape Edith when she was young (p. 94). Thus, with little trouble a "defence of pleasure" could become a defence of rape.

In fact, as eminent a critic as Desmond Pacey has trouble understanding the scene: he asks, "Is Cohen upholding virginity or promiscuity, sexual abstinence or sexual orgies?" (p. 265). Cohen isn't upholding any of these things; they are all part of life upon which he is casting an ironic eye. Pacey, however, comes very close to seeing the irony of the Danish Vibrator scene before he side-steps the issue:

> Catherine in the extremity of her flagellations is closer to Edith and F. in the extremity of their orgy with the Danish Vibrator than she is to a member of the bourgeoisie leading a respectable and moderate life. Is it too fanciful to suggest that in referring to the sex machine by its initials, D. V., Cohen is suggesting that the surrender to it is not so very different from the surrender to God's will? (p. 266)

Exactly. But what does that say about surrender to God's will? It becomes the same thing as being super-stimulated by a sex machine. All experience is placed on the same level and has the same value. According to Pacey, Beautiful Losers has an "articulated notion of the desirability of combining spiritual vision with physical ecstasy" (p. 250). The novel makes it clear, however, that the way either one or both of these states is attained does not matter.

In her article on Beautiful Losers Linda Hutcheon recognizes the similarity between the two systems that cause Catherine's mutilation and death and Edith's sexual stimulation and subsequent despair and death:

> In the novel two opposite systems are presented: the religions of the spirit and of the flesh. In their

> extreme forms both demand a denial of individual identity, in favour of some vaster, more inhuman, but not higher purpose. F. wants to free the body from genital tyranny. His star pupil, Edith, agrees that all body parts are erotogenic--until none of hers co-operates, forcing her to resort to mechanical means of satisfaction. The final undercutting of the religion of the flesh is the post-Vibrator entry of Hitler and his sadistic victimization of F. and Edith. (pp. 49-50)

The religion of the spirit which Catherine stands for "is undercut in the novel, for it too represents an extreme system" (p. 50).

[16] Morley says that Catherine's "transfiguration from plague-scarred dark complexion to clear white skin is Cohen's metaphor for the losers' sea-change into something rare and strange, beyond the failure of death" (*The Immoral Moralists*, p. 96). I don't agree at all: I take it that Cohen is making a statement about Catherine's complete desertion of her people. For an Indian to turn white is the ultimate betrayal of the Indian heritage.

[17] As for Edith, her suicide is quick. Her husband, the narrator, is more interested in "fictional victims" than in real ones, and he would rather listen to the sounds of the ventilation fan and elevator than to Edith's stories and to her body (p. 7). Edith's life with him is grey and pointless, and she ends it by sitting at the bottom of an elevator shaft and getting squashed by the elevator. She, too, is dead at twenty-four, crushed by a system, although a mechanical one rather than a religious one, that came down on her as it did on Catherine. In Edith's case the image of the elevator, the mechanical system, is probably used to represent the whole of the society in which she lives and of which her husband is a typical member. No one has ever credited Cohen with writing a feminist novel; but if a man's sexual obsession with a woman, dead saint or otherwise, is put in terms of "coming down on a saint," that makes him as dangerous to her as a descending elevator.

[18] According to Patricia Morley, Cohen believes "in the unity of body and soul, of the oneness of the human being in himself and with his world . . . He pictures the body as a telephone or communication system connecting one human being with another--and with himself" (*The Immoral Moralists*, p. 137). What readers tend to forget is that "his world" includes technology. The body as telephone is not a negative image. Morley says that Cohen attacks "the dehumanizing influence of technology" and favours "the reverential mystique of the holiness of the body and the entire natural world" (p. 130, p. 16). She does not see that he doesn't stop at the natural world; he extends holiness and reverence to include everything.

Chapter VII

[1] Alice Munro, Lives of Girls and Women (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971), p. 70.

[2] There are two women in Lives of Girls and Women who are even more "civilized" than Ada. Madeleine is a city girl who doesn't walk on gravel roads unless she has to (p. 16). However, she is not civilized in the best sense of the word. She is suspected of beating her child, and when life in the country gets to be too much for her, she runs away to Toronto. Uncle Bill's wife, Nile, seems to be a perfect, artificial urban being. The only interest she has in green things is directed towards her green-glazed fingernails. At one point Bill explains Nile, "I don't think she even knew that fur come off a creature's back. She thought they manufactured them right in the store!" (p. 82). Ada, of course, is not such an extreme example of the "civilized" woman as these two are.

[3] Mr. Boyce, who is from England, plays the organ and teaches music in Jubilee for a time. It's hard to imagine him surviving the sinking of the Athenia because "even the run from his car to the school, in the Jubilee winter, left him gasping and outraged." (p. 119). Although Boyce is not important in Del's life, he is interesting because he seems to be a contrast to the other men in the novel. He is an urban man yet is not associated with technology (that is, machines) but rather with art. Still, if art is included in the world of technology, Boyce is very much a part of that world rather than the natural one.

[4] In "Postcard" Helen Louise (possibly a forerunner of Fern Dougherty) has her first sexual encounter with Ted Forgie, a radio announcer. Forgie, like Art Chamberlain, also runs out on his woman. Munro seems to be saying that human relationships (especially those between man and woman) suffer if the man is identified with technology. In her fiction radio people are outsiders, transients, men of glamour perhaps. In "Marrakesh" Dorothy's new neighbour, Blaik Kirby, also works at the radio station; and "like most of the people who worked at the radio station he was not a native of this town and in a few years would probably move on" (Something I've been Meaning to Tell You . . . thirteen stories [Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1974], p. 163). Radio announcers are not an integrated part of the community because they don't put down roots. Kirby's appearance reflects the type of work he does: "His smile, like his voice, was accomplished, mechanical" (p. 164). And like Chamberlain and Forgie, Kirby's main function in the story is sexual (but not in a positive sense). Dorothy accidentally sees her granddaughter and the radio announcer make love in his glassed-in porch next door.

[5] It is interesting to note that although Garnet is a "primitive" man, the embodiment of passion, he is not quite a Mellors to Del's Connie. Garnet lives in the country with his family, but Munro realistically arranges that he work in town since a living cannot be made from the land. He is no gamekeeper; he fixes cars and farm machinery in a garage. And

unlike a Lawrencian hero, he has no philosophy of sex and nature--in fact, he seems remarkably silent.

[6] Alice Munro, Dance of the Happy Shades (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1968), p. 81.

[7] In "Home" the narrator's father and step-mother have a house "not designed to take advantage of the out-of-doors, but if possible to ignore it. People who worked in the fields all day may have sensibly decided that at other times they did not want to look at them" (74: New Canadian Stories, p. 134).

[8] Helen, the narrator of "Day of the Butterfly," is a grade six farm girl whose ambition is to be an airline hostess. She is not confident enough, however, to tell many people of her desire for such a glamorous job. In "The Time of Death" nine year-old Patricia sings to bring in money, and dreams of a future as a singer or movie-star (another glamorous job) are her escape from her real and unpleasant present life. Her father and most men of the town work in the mill. Mr. Parry looks as "pale, mute, unexpectant" as his retarded eighteen month-old son, Benny (Dance of the Happy Shades, p. 93). After Benny's accident and death, Patricia and the other two Parry children stay with neighbours. Mr. McGee works in a store, and the difference in class between millworkers and store-owner is evident. For instance, the McGees have an indoor bathroom, and because the Parry children are used to a pot under the bed, the two younger ones use a vase rather than face the frightening flush toilet. Patricia, however, in her desire to ascend the social ladder is comfortable with such "new-fangled" technology.

[9] Horses also symbolize Boyd's nostalgia for the past in The Tenants were Corrie and Tennie. Written by an expatriate American, Kent Thompson, this novel presents us with a "cowboy" (William A. Boyd is the real name of Hopalong Cassidy) who is totally against industrialism. He wants factories, automobiles, and snowmobiles destroyed; he is against fluoridation and pesticides; and he wants cities abandoned and people returned to rural life where they can be happy and self-sufficient. In his madness he raves: "Destroy all automobiles. Ride horses" ([Toronto: Macmillan, 1973], p. 182).

[10] The stories that some of Munro's characters tell themselves or other people can be compared to the pastoral icon in Dave Godfrey's "The Hard-Headed Collector" which is literally covered with plastic to protect it against the harsh reality that surrounds it (in his Death Goes Better with Coca-Cola [Toronto: Anansi, 1967], p. 109). A corner of the plastic covering is torn, however, and the implication here is that sooner or later the icon will be totally uncovered, that the pastoral impulse will inevitably be confronted by reality.

Conclusion

[1]There are limitations, of course, to this type of study. Only seven writers of fiction have been chosen, and the selection of fiction is made from that written in Canada during the last twenty-five years. Other writers of the same period could have been chosen, but these seven offer a wide enough variety of response to the topic. Technology and pastoralism in the works of writers of an earlier period (Grove, for instance) could be studied profitably in the same way. Also, Canadian poetry probably contains enough pastoralism to merit a separate study. Since the focus of the thesis is on technology and pastoralism, the analysis of the literature selected for this thesis is not complete. Only certain features of a work--those considered to be pastoral or related to pastoral--are identified and analyzed. Because this is a partial view of part of Canadian literature, there is much that is not included and much that cannot be included.

This study of seven writers who are currently writing fiction in Canada has shown that a clearer understanding of their works can be gained by examining them with an old term and an old pattern--pastoral--in mind. "Pastoral" can describe a wide variety of literature that has an underlying similarity. Also, of course, it is a term that can describe certain features of a work even if the work as a whole would not be classed as pastoral. And the departures from the conventional pattern are worth looking at as well.

The type of characterization found in conventional (especially romantic) pastoral prevails in a large number of the stories and novels that were chosen--not so much the idea of the "humble" hero of modest occupation as the hero (or heroine) who is the "natural" man (or woman) and who is contrasted with the "technological" man (or woman). And once this type of characterization is used, the conventional pastoral activity of love-making is practically inevitable. The other activities (the artistic ones) that are expected in pastoral literature are virtually ignored. Even though Del Jordan and Lawrence Breavman are writers, for instance, there is no sense that they are like the artist-shepherds of classical pastoral who play their pipes and write their verse. The process of converting the raw material of life into pastoral literature (or perhaps one could say, selecting facts that are seen as potential material for pastoral) is more evident in the case of Demeter Proudfoot's relationship with Hazard Lepage and of Mark Madham's with Jeremy Sadness.

The natural landscape is important in many of the works written by these seven authors. Perhaps it could be said that the more closely a writer follows the conventional pastoral pattern the more important nature will be in his or her fiction. Of the seven only Richler pays almost no attention to the natural landscape; all the others make some use of nature, of the garden or wild nature or both. Nostalgia is the prevalent mood of pastoral literature and, as most of the writers indicate, nostalgia for the past is both an appealing and a destructive emotion. In The Diviners Morag's husband cannot go back to India because it wouldn't be the same as it was when he lived there as a child. He is "trapped in a garden of the mind, a place which no longer has a being in external reality. Is everyone?" (p. 185). The phrase "garden of the mind" includes in a common pastoral landscape the emotion that is at the heart of pastoralism. The narrators of "Wood" and of Surfacing, for instance, are indeed "trapped in a garden of the mind," but Del Jordan and narrators of other Munro stories are not. Memories of the past, like actual gardens, can serve as a prison or as a positive temporary retreat. Pastoralism can be as much a quest as an escape.

Understanding the features that are expected of pastoralism and the characteristics of the different types of pastoral literature helps us to see the departures from the conventional pattern when they occur. By having a pastoral framework within which to work, a reader can identify and explain certain events, symbols, characters, landscapes, etc. that might otherwise remain obscure. Even if only parts of the pastoral pattern are used by an author or if the pattern is used in an inverted ironic way, the reader can gain valuable insights into the literature.

Perhaps, because of its strong nostalgia for the past and for the simpler technologies of the past, only The Wabeno Feast could be described as simple, conventional pastoral. All the other novels and stories that are dealt with in this thesis depart from that pastoral pattern in minor or major ways. For instance, characters in fiction can have a pastoral ideology which the author can undercut in one way or another. The allegiance to past values that certain characters show (Jeffrey Anchyr, Mary in "The Shining Houses") can be judged sympathetically but is presented as ineffectual by the author. Also, by using a mad narrator (Demeter Proudfoot, Mark Madham, the narrator of Surfacing) the author forces the reader to reexamine the values that are a part of pastoral ideology. If the pastoral pattern is used primarily for purposes of satire as Simpson does (Arkwright, The Peacock Papers), the past and values of the past seem to be favoured; however, since he clearly blames human nature for human problems, neither pastoralism nor any other ideology is presented as a viable solution to these problems. Then there is Cohen who, by advocating a view of life that lacks a hierarchy of values, uses the pastoral pattern ironically. Departures from the conventional pattern have an ironic resonance when compared to the expected features of conventional pastoral. In addition, stories can be about pastoral ideology without being pastoral; Munro, for example, uses potentially pastoral material but her stories, for the most part, are not pastorals because they lack nostalgia. And yet, if a reader's childhood was anything like that of Munro's characters, several of her stories could evoke nostalgia for the past (and past technologies) in the reader.

Modern pastoralism, as found in some of the works of these writers, contains some of the characteristics of conventional pastoralism, as I have shown; but it goes beyond the nature-technology opposition (which is the basis of conventional pastoralism) and uses the newer pattern suggested by McLuhan where old technology (and its values and environment) is contrasted with new technology (and its values and environment), and in the process the old environment is transformed into pastoral art. His statement is not an insight into a startlingly new phenomenon; it is an insight into what has probably always existed (the pastoral impulse, nostalgia for the landscape of childhood, call it what you will), but it states in a few words a new approach to that old phenomenon.

Probably ever since the Industrial Revolution writers have increasingly had to deal with the intrusions that technology in the form of machines has made on nature. So, even though pastoralism existed before, this new awareness of the machine in the garden had a great impact on what pastoralism came to mean. But now the garden (and the wilderness, too) can be dispensed with by an author--by Richler, for example--and his work still be called pastoral. Using McLuhan's insight into pastoralism enlarges the scope of literature that can henceforth be considered pastoral. Instead of limiting the term to mean cows, green grass, and trees (a meaning that is still used in everyday speech) or to mean fake shepherds in retreat from court life in an equally artificial, though "natural," landscape, "pastoral" has come to mean something more. Using McLuhan's insight, one can see that pastoralism can exist even in the absence of grass, trees, and shepherds. Looking at pastoral literature in this way connects pastoral literature that is currently being written to that written in the past. Also, I suspect, it can link literature written in different places. Modern pastoral literature written in Canada probably has strong similarities to that being written in other countries. Even if time and place are different, pastoral literature will have as a constant the idea that a new technology creates a new environment that turns the old environment into art--into pastoral.

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